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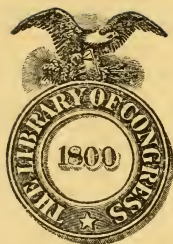
1915

American Dramatists Series

Birds of a Feather

Thomas J. Gaffney





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American Dramatists Series

BIRDS OF A FEATHER

A Play in Four Acts

THOMAS J. GAFFNEY



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CAST OF CHARACTERS

Jimmie Saunders
Howard Knowles
Morris Goldmann
Officer Flannagan
Sam Shaffer
Rose Noble
Alice Winslow
Amy

ACT I

Scene—Interior of Rose Noble's cabin, Black Mountain, Lake George.

ACT II

Scene—A nicely furnished drawing-room in a flat in the West Forties, New York City.

Time—Three years after the first act.

ACT III

Scene—A handsomely furnished room in a side-street hotel in the Times Square district, New York. The entire place has an atmosphere of the theatre. There are several trunks, partially packed, around the room. There is a "Three Sheet" on the back wall showing a figure in Oriental costume, and posed as for dancing. Photographs of celebrities of the theatrical world adorn the mantelpiece and walls.

Time—Three years after the second act.

ACT IV

Scene—A poorly furnished room in a tenement house on Rivington Street, New York City. The walls are bare, the furniture old, but everything has an air of cleanliness. There is a screen in one corner of the room hiding a bed. A window up stage looks out on a dimly-lighted air shaft. A sewing machine is placed in front of window so as to get the fast-fading light. The room is lighted by means of a lamp, which, as the curtain goes up, is discovered on table, down stage.

Time—Same as the preceding act.

BIRDS OF A FEATHER

ACT I

Scene—Interior of Rose Noble's cabin, Black Mountain, Lake George.

The place is roughly furnished, yet homelike, giving the appearance of a woman's hand in its decorations. There is a folding bed on one side of the room. A hugh fireplace on the other side. Tables, rough wooden chairs, bearskin on floor. The door leading to the outside is closed, but the window is open a little bit from the bottom.

At Rise—The stage is empty. The fire in the fireplace has a red glow, as though waiting to be replenished.

After the curtain has been up for a moment there is a sound of distant shots. Another pause. Then breaking branches are heard from without. Another pause. Then some one is heard running, and the door is tried from the outside. It does not open, and after a second or two, a head is seen looking through the window. After seeing that no one is

within, a man raises the window cautiously and enters, closing the window after him. There are more shots, a little bit nearer this time. The man looks around, frightened. He is holding his hand, which is bloody; he takes his handkerchief from his neck, dips it in the water pail near fireplace, binds his hand up, as well as he can.

Rose Noble is heard talking in the distance, but gradually coming nearer.

ROSE—No, Sam, you needn't come in.

(The man inside hears this, looks quickly around, grabs pistol from his pocket and hides behind curtains that evidently hide a bed, up stage.

A key is heard in the lock, and after a moment, Rose Noble and Sam Shaffer enter.)

ROSE—You can't stay, you know that, Sam.

SAM—I don't want to stay, Rose. I've got to go back and join the posse that a lookin' fer that burglar.

ROSE—Whatever'd you leave 'em for, just to bring me home? *(Laughs.)* Gee, anybody'd think I was a baby, the way you men around here look after me.

SAM—Well, we do kinder look on ye as a baby, Rose. It aint very nice to be livin' alone up here, as you do.

ROSE—Well, I'd rather be livin' alone here, makin' my livin' with my little sewing, than I

would to be livin' roun' the neighbors' houses, dependent on them for everything I get. I'm independent this way.

SAM—(*Uneasily.*) Yes—I know you are—darned independent. (*Coming closer to her.*) Say, Rose, why can't you care for me a little bit?

ROSE—(*Seriously.*) I don't know, Sam, why I can't—I jest don't, that's all.

SAM—You know I've got my home all waitin' fer you, Rose—if you'll jest say the word. I don't think it's right—or safe—fer ye to be livin' like this.

ROSE—Pshaw! You needn't be aferred o' me. I've lived here ever since grandpop died, an' nothin's hurt me yet.

SAM—Yes, I know that nothin's hurt you—yet. What I'm afraid of is, that somethin' *will*. You know, ever since these summer boarders been comin' 'round here—well, you never can tell nothin' 'bout them.

ROSE—Oh, Sam, you make me tired! One o' them same “summer boarders,” as you call them, saved me from that bull dog last week, while the rest o' you all stood 'round lookin' as if you was scared to death. (*Looking at bandage on her wrist.*) Dr. Smith said I sure did have a close call.

SAM—Ever seen him since?

ROSE—No, I aint. It's funny, too, 'cause he

said he was goin' to stay here for some time to come.

SAM—Well, I guess he didn't. No one's seen him since that day. (*Thinking.*) Say, it's a funny thing; but that same night the burglaries started in the summer cottages —

ROSE—(*Angrily.*) Now look-a-here, Sam Shaffer—I s'pose you're thinkin' he had somethin' to do with them.

SAM—Well, he might have.

ROSE—That's foolishness. Such a fine-lookin' feller as he is! Gee, I could fall in love with a man like him, 'thought no trouble at all.

SAM—Oh, what would a feller of his class want with a girl of yours? Then ther's that other one—the feller that's always a runnin' up here to see you. What's he want?

ROSE—Not that's any of your business, but just to show you I could have a lot of money if I wanted it, I'll tell you. He wants I should sell the place to him for a summer home. He's offered me as much as a thousand dollars for it—just yesterday.

SAM—Before you sell the place to him, you'd better let lawyer Oakford look him up.

ROSE—(*Softly.*) I don't want no one to look him up.

SAM—(*Angrily.*) Has he ben a makin' love to you?

ROSE—If he has, it's none of your business.

SAM—Well, I'll make it my business if he don't let you alone.

ROSE—Why? I've told you I don't love you, an' I'm not a'goin' to.

SAM—Well, you know that I love you, Rose—I have loved you ever since you an' me went to school together. There aint no one else to look after you —'ceptin' the folks of the village, an' you bet we're a'goin' to do it, too.

ROSE—I don't want no lookin' after—I've told you that lots of times. (*Petulantly.*) I guess you'd better be a'gettin' back to that posse, if you want to catch your robber.

SAM—All right, Rose—I'm goin'. (*At door.*) But I'm goin' t' keep on lookin' after you as long as you live, an' don't you forget it! (*Exit, slamming door after him.*)

(*Rose laughs aloud. She throws wood on the fire. Takes off her hat, lights lamp, fills kettle from water pail, hangs it on hook in fireplace, closes window and starts toward curtains covering bed. As she nears them, the Man who is hidden there, comes from behind them, covering her with his pistol. He has put on a mask while hidden behind the curtains.*)

MAN—Hands up!

ROSE —(*Gives a startled scream.*) Oh! (*Looks toward door as though thinking of running out.*)

MAN—Pull down that curtain. (*Indicating curtain at window.*)

ROSE—(*Does so.*) Say, you needn't scare a feller to death. I'm only a girl, unarmed.

MAN—You've got a worse weapon than my pistol—if I'd let you use it.

ROSE—What?

MAN—Your voice and tongue.

ROSE—Gee, you must be a brave man—not—— No wonder you're ashamed of yourself, keeping your face covered that way.

MAN—Well, I'm not exactly proud of myself. Say, what would you do for any one who had saved your life?

ROSE—That's a funny question. If I had the chance I'd save their life, too.

MAN—You're sure of that?

ROSE—Of course I am. Who are you, anyway?

MAN—Did you hear those shots outside a while ago?

ROSE—I sure did. They kept me a-waitin' at the foot of the mountain for a long time because they said the robber had —— (*Breathlessly.*) Say—you aint him, are ye?

MAN—(*Slowly.*) Yes, I'm him.

ROSE—(*Frightened.*) Oh!

MAN—Well, you needn't be scared. I won't hurt you— not if you do nothing to let them know I'm here.

ROSE—Take off your mask.

MAN—What for?

ROSE—'Cause, there's somethin' about you I know, but I can't place you. I want to see your face. (*He slowly unfastens mask.*) You!

MAN—Yes, me — the man who saved you from that dog last week.

ROSE—You're the burglar?

MAN—(*With a grim smile.*) I am. (*Suddenly starts, holding hand.*)

ROSE—Your hand is bleeding.

MAN—Yes, I'm shot. (*Looking around.*) I guess I'm treed.

ROSE—You're not treed while I'm here. (*Goes to window, looks out cautiously.*) Nobody out there. Guess they've lost you. (*Taking his hand and unwrapping handkerchief.*) It's nothin' but a flesh wound. Now — (*Going behind curtains to bed*) don't look 'round. (*Takes off skirt.*)

MAN—All right, I won't.

ROSE—(*Tears up skirt she has taken off, gets some water from the kettle she has placed upon the fire; washes and bandages his hand.*) Say, mister, I'd do most anything for you after what you done for me.

MAN—Yes, I know, little girl.

ROSE—I don't know what to call you.

MAN—Neither do I. Some people call me—
but never mind, don't call me anything.

ROSE—I'll just call you friend.

MAN—All right, little girl. Say, you're a brick.

ROSE—Are you makin' fun of me?

MAN—Of course not—why?

ROSE—Down in the village they call me
“brick top,” 'cause my hair's red.

MAN—I meant you're made of good clay.

ROSE—(*Finishing binding his hand.*) There,
is that all right?

MAN—It sure is.

ROSE—Why does a man like you steal for a
living? You know it's wrong.

MAN—When I see something I want, a diamond
necklace or a string of pearls—even a bag of pea-
nuts—something dares me to get it. The game
fascinates me. I know the danger—shot—
prison—and all that, but I must have what I've
seen and—I usually get it. When I do get it, I
don't want it any more; but I love the life, the
excitement—the danger. I can't stop it—I've
tried, but it's no use. I must steal, steal, steal!
It's in my blood.

ROSE—(*Thoughtfully.*) I wonder if I couldn't
help to make you better.

MAN—(*With a bitter laugh.*) Don't you ever try to reform a criminal. It can't be done.

ROSE—I'd like to try.

MAN—How?

ROSE—Well—by thinking of you—by your knowing I *was* thinking of you. Whenever that feeling to steal gets too strong in you to resist, you'd think a little bit of me—of the girl whose life you saved—and then, perhaps, you wouldn't do it.

MAN—Why, I tell you, nothing on earth can stop me. Even my mother couldn't stop me—and I loved her better than I ever loved any one else on this earth.

ROSE—But you can't help me thinking of you.

MAN—No, and I'll remember you. Are you all alone here? Haven't you any one to protect you?

ROSE—Oh, all the people 'round here guard me. You heard Sam—what he said?

MAN—The man who was here with you just now?

ROSE—Yes.

MAN—Yes, I did, and I wondered at the time why you wouldn't do what he asked you to do. A little girl like you needs some big man to protect and love her. Isn't he good enough for you?

ROSE—He's got a heart as big as an ox—but—but——

MAN—But you don't love him, is that it?

ROSE—No, I don't.

MAN—Well, the right man will come, some day.

(A knock on the outside door. The Man jumps up, grabs his pistol, looks about for a place to hide. Knock is repeated.)

ALICE WINSLOW—*(Outside.)* Open the door; let me in!

MAN—*(Whispering.)* I guess I'm trapped!

ROSE—*(Whispering.)* I guess you're not!
(Going to folding bed and opening it.) Here—get in here for a few minutes. It's the only place there is—now.

MAN—*(Gets inside bed.)* Gee, I can't see!

ROSE—You don't want to see. I'll see for you.
(Closes bed.)

ALICE—*(Outside, kicking on door.)* What's the matter—open the door!

ROSE—*(Going to door, throws it open.)* Come in.
(Enter Alice Winslow.)

ALICE—Well, you're slow enough about letting a person in.

ROSE—Why shouldn't I be—I didn't know the “person's” voice—and this place isn't very safe with a robber outside trying to get away from a crowd of men.

ALICE—(*Laughs.*) Well, for Heaven's sake! You didn't take me for a robber, did you?

ROSE—(*Looking at her suspiciously.*) Well—you never can tell. Are you one of the summer boarders, lost on the mountain?

ALICE—I'm a summer boarder all right, but I'm not lost. (*Looking around.*)

ROSE—Then what on earth are you doing up on the mountain at this time of the evening?

ALICE—I wanted to see you.

ROSE—See me? What for?

ALICE—Oh, for several reasons. In the first place (*proudly*), I'm an actress!

ROSE—(*Innocently.*) Oh, one of them "show folks"?

ALICE—(*Smiles.*) Well, yes, that's me.

ROSE—(*Looking at her admiringly.*) Gee! I never seen one before. (*Disappointed.*) Why, you're almost like us other folks.

ALICE—Well, what did you expect? Did you think we had horns?

ROSE—(*Still studying her.*) Well, I didn't know. My! (*Admiringly.*) You're dressed like a peacock.

ALICE—Oh, not so's you could notice it. I had to wear out my last season's wardrobe, and where'd I find a better place than among all the "rubes"? I'm stopping down at the lake, at

one of the hotels, studying a new part for the show. I'm going to play a "Merry Little Mountain Maid," and I came up here to get the atmosphere for the character.

ROSE—(*Innocently.*) You can't take that away, can you?

ALICE—Take what away?

ROSE—The atmosphere.

ALICE—(*Looks at her suspiciously.*) Say, are you "kidding" me? (*Rose shakes her head.*) Well, all right then. When I speak of getting the "atmosphere," I mean studying everything that will help to make the part stand out when I play it.

ROSE—Well, what can I do for you?

ALICE—Oh, you? Well, you can let me study you, too.

ROSE—What good'll that do you?

ALICE—Why, don't you see? If I can do the things on the stage that you do in your own home, it will make my part more natural. I heard everybody talking about you ever since I've been here, and I wanted to see you. I've been waiting at a farmhouse, down the road, almost all day, just to get a glimpse of you, and, when you didn't show up, I thought the best thing I could do would be to come up and see you myself.

ROSE—(*Quietly.*) Is that all you wanted to see me about?

ALICE—Well—you see, people are talking about you ——

ROSE—(*Quickly.*) Do they say anything wrong about me?

ALICE—Why should they? Have you enemies?

ROSE—I don't know. Some people say nasty things because I live here alone.

ALICE—Yes, I've heard you lived here—alone. You've lived that way for quite a long time, haven't you?

ROSE—For the past two years. (*Sadly.*) Ever since grandpop went away.

ALICE—Where'd he go?

ROSE—About one-half mile down the road, where there is a turn—and a little wooden cross. (*Wipes her eyes furtively.*)

ALICE—Dead?

ROSE—Dead.

ALICE—(*With a slight shiver.*) Aren't you afraid to be here all alone—in the mountains?

ROSE—Why should I be? I can shoot a pistol 'most as good as any man. If you'd hold up a nickel between your fingers, I'd pop it out every time. Want to see me? (*Takes a small revolver from fireplace shelf.*)

ALICE—Well, hardly—I didn't come here to be a target. (*Laughs.*) You certainly are a unique type. No wonder he's——

ROSE—No wonder "who's"?

ALICE—Oh, nothing. Say, would you sell the clothes you've got on?

ROSE—(*Astonished.*) What for? Do you want me to go naked?

ALICE—Why, no, dear child. I'll give you five times the price of those clothes.

ROSE—(*Looking down at clothes.*) Don't they fit all right?

ALICE—Yes, pretty well.

ROSE—Well, then, I'll not sell.

ALICE—Oh, all right. (*Looking around the room.*) Say, you've got a cozy little place here, all right, all right. Where'd you get all the furnishings?

ROSE—Oh, they was grandpop's. Some of 'em he had a long time. That bed is the newest thing.

ALICE—Oh, that's a folding bed, isn't it? I thought it was a bookcase.

ROSE—Yes, most people who see it think that same thing. It took grandpop two whole days to get it up the mountain from the hotel.

ALICE—How on earth did he ever come to buy that?

ROSE—Oh, he didn't buy it. They gave it to him—in fact, paid him to take it.

ALICE—What for?

ROSE—(*In a matter-of-fact tone.*) It was buggy.

ALICE—Dear me. (*Edging away from bed. As her back is turned, an ornament falls from top of bed.*)

ALICE—(*Startled—turns.*) What's that?

ROSE—(*Also startled, looking at bed apprehensively.*) Oh, that—that—oh, that's nothing. (*Laughing nervously.*) I—I just wanted to show you a trick.

ALICE—Well, what's the trick?

ROSE—I—I—can't ever do the same one twice. If you wait a while I'll show you another.

ALICE—(*With meaning.*) Oh, I'll wait all right.

ROSE—Now, tell me, honestly, what you came to see me for.

ALICE—(*Looking at her keenly.*) Gee, you're a smart one. Well, if you want to know, I came up here to give you a bit of advice.

ROSE—(*On her guard.*) Advice? About what?

ALICE—(*Bluntly.*) About—Howard Knowles!

ROSE—(*Startled.*) Oh! (*With dignity.*) Well, what about him?

ALICE—I came to advise you—for your own good—to let him alone. And what's more—to make him let *you* alone. He's coming here too

much altogether—for your good and—well, if you must know it—mine.

ROSE—That's his business, aint it? And mine?

ALICE—Well, I'm going to make it mine, too. What's he trying to do with you?

ROSE—(*Indignantly.*) He's been talking business to me—that's what!

ALICE—(*Sneers.*) I'll bet—fine business!

ROSE—Well, anyway, it's *my* business—not yours. I like Mr. Knowles and I don't care who knows it. (*The bed is seen to shake, and creaks a little. Neither of the women pay any attention to it.*)

ALICE—(*Jealous.*) Well, I "like" Mr. Knowles, too, and I'm not going to have any snip of a country gawk coming in between him and me —

ROSE—(*With a little cry.*) What do you mean? Why, he told me —

MAN—(*From inside bed.*) Open this bed! I'll smother!

ALICE—(*Screams.*) What's that? A man's voice!

ROSE—(*Nervously.*) Oh, that's nothing—that's just another trick I'm going to show you.

MAN—(*Inside bed—struggles—bed starts to come down.*) Hurry, open it up. I can't stand it any longer!

ALICE—(*Watching bed.*) Oh-ho! I guess I understand now why people talk about you!

(*Bed flies open and Man tumbles out.*)

ALICE—(*With cruel laughter.*) A man! Well, well, well! Good-night, my sweet little mountain flower! (*Laughter.*) I guess there isn't much chance of me losing Howard, after all. (*Exits laughing.*)

ROSE—(*Bolting door after her—goes to side of Man, who is brushing dust out of his eyes.*) Did you see her?

MAN—No, I couldn't see anything. (*Scrambling to his feet.*) I'll have to get out of here right away. She *saw me!*

(*Shout heard quite near house from outside.*)

MAN—My God! I've got to get away from here.

ROSE—(*Putting light out, then going to window cautiously.*) You can't—now. There's some one comin'. You can't get out of here, 'ceptin' one way.

MAN—(*Nervously.*) Which way's that?

ROSE—(*Tensely.*) That's a way nobody knows but me. My grandpop used it a good many years ago—for reasons—— (*Pulls bearskin rug away from spot on floor.*) Those boards can be removed. There's a trapdoor that leads through a ravine to a cave that overhangs the lake nearly half a mile below. There is a knotted rope fastened to the rock and concealed by the vines. When you get to the bottom, take any one of the boats you find there, pull the staple, row to the other side of the lake—and you're safe.

MAN—It's my only chance—I've got to hurry. (*Removing boards.*) I don't know what you're doing this for, little girl. I can't understand it. I never did have any one try to help me before in all my life.

ROSE—I'm doing it—because you saved my life—from that dog!

MAN—(*Has removed trapdoor—stands in trap, on steps.*) Well, all I can say—now—is God bless you! I'm bad—I always will be bad, I guess, but (*drawing notebook from pocket, hastily writing on a sheet of it and tearing sheet out—gives it to her*)—if you ever need a friend, no matter where you are, write to me, and if I'm alive, and out of jail, I'll come. (*She takes paper, tries to read.*) Can't you make it out? (*She shakes her head.*) Jimmie Saunders, 23 Rivington Street, New York. That's what it says. (*Noise of horse is heard approaching.*)

ROSE—(*Goes quickly to window, looks out.*) Ssh! Some one's coming! Quick! Go!

JIMMIE—(*In whisper.*) I'm off. I'm mighty sorry if I've got you into any trouble.

ROSE—(*Anxiously.*) Oh, hurry! What trouble could you get me into?

JIMMIE—(*Amazed at her ignorance of social customs.*) Oh—none, I guess. (*Knock on the door.*)

ROSE—Oh, please go. You *must*!

JIMMIE—(*As he disappears through trap.*) Remember, Jimmie Saunders, Rivington Street.

(*Rose, as he disappears, quickly closes trapdoor, throwing bearskin over it again.*)

KNOWLES—(*Knocks on door again.*) Open the door. It's I, Rose.

ROSE—(*Kneels with her ear to the floor, as if listening, to see whether Jimmie had gone.*) All right—just a minute. (*When she is satisfied that he has, she arises, quickly looks about room to see whether any signs of his visit remain, then goes to door and throws it open.*) Come in. (*Yawns.*) I was pretty tired, and so I layed down fer a little while. (*Yawns again.*) Gee, but you skeered me!

KNOWLES—(*Enters, looks about suspiciously.*) You haven't seen that burglar they've been looking for, have you?

ROSE—I aint seen nothing that even looked like a burglar. (*Shyly.*) I'm—glad to see you.

KNOWLES—And I'm glad to see you. I was a little bit worried about you.

ROSE—Why?

KNOWLES—Well, you see, after the robbery at the Sagamore Hotel, three nights ago, when a partner of one of the dancers stole her pearl necklace, and escaped, we've been looking for him; he

stole a boat from the landing and was seen heading this way. We've been chasing him hard all day—he's here on this mountain somewhere—he can't get away. We've had one good sight at him, and one of the men took a shot at him.

ROSE—Shoo! It must ha' been a deer.

KNOWLES—Don't you think we can tell a man from a deer?

ROSE—(*Simply.*) Not if you're city folks. "Deer" are shot here every year, and afterwards turn out to be men.

KNOWLES—Well, that's so. (*Smiles—comes closer to her.*) You know (*softly, ingratiatingly*)—this is the night you were going to give me your answer.

ROSE—(*Hanging her head a little.*) Yes, I know I was. (*Suddenly.*) Do you really want me to go away with you — away off to the big city — really want me to marry you ——?

KNOWLES—Why, of course I do.

ROSE—(*Shaking her head.*) Honestly, I don't see why. There you have all of them beautiful women down to the hotel—and yet you fall in love with me. Oh, I just can't understand it nohow.

KNOWLES—(*Placing his arm around her.*) Why, it's simple enough, none of them are half as beautiful as you are, nor half as good.

ROSE—Yes, but another thing I can't understand is why you don't want to marry me right here where all my friends are ———(*Wistfully.*) You—you aint ashamed of me, are you?

KNOWLES—Of course I'm not ashamed of you. You see, it's like this. I simply can't let people—my people—know that I'm married for three whole years; if I do, I lose all chance of the money that was left to me, providing I didn't marry until I was thirty-five years old.

ROSE—(*Startled.*) Three whole years? Oh! Have we got to wait that long?

KNOWLES—(*Laughs.*) Of course not, little foolish! We'll be married right away, but we'll keep it *secret* for that length of time.

ROSE—(*Looking doubtful.*) Oh——h!

KNOWLES—Why, you trust me, don't you?

ROSE—(*Throwing her arms about his neck.*) Of course I trust you—you can't doubt that.

KNOWLES—All right, then. You'll go to-night?

ROSE—Oh, not to-night—surely. You won't want me to go without saying good-bye to *anybody*, will you?

KNOWLES—(*Softly.*) It's best, little girl.

ROSE—(*Looking about the room, sadly.*) All right. Just as you say.

KNOWLES—Now, tell me, did you get that pail

of water for me—you know, the funny-smelling water from the secret well?

ROSE—Of course I did, but I can't see what you want with it. Grandpop told me never to tell anybody where that well was, cause if I did, it would bring nothing but misery to everybody connected with it.

KNOWLES—Well, you don't have to tell even me where it is located. I just wanted to see what it looked like.

ROSE—(*Taking small pail from behind curtains of window.*) Here it is.

KNOWLES—(*Hurriedly takes it, bends down before fire, lifts it to the level of his eyes, holding it so that the rays of the fire will fall upon it. Nods his head. Sticks his finger in it, and tastes it with the tip of his tongue. Spills a little bit on his white handkerchief, holds that in front of fire until it dries, and then smells handkerchief—almost to himself.*) By God, it is ——

ROSE—(*Who has been watching all this in blank amazement.*) Is what?

KNOWLES—(*Looks at her a moment as if he did not see her—then suddenly comes to his senses.*) Oh! Why, it's just what I thought it was—very

bad, dangerous water. Your grandpop was right—you must never tell any one where the well is located. It would bring nothing but misery to any one who did not know how to use it.

ROSE—I don't see how I could ever tell any one but you about it—seeing I'm going away with you to-night.

KNOWLES—That's right. (*Looking at her keenly.*) You know, little girl, I love you. I've told you so many times, and you trust me absolutely, don't you?

ROSE—Why you know I do.

KNOWLES—Yes, but you shouldn't!

ROSE—Shouldn't? Why not?

KNOWLES—Oh, there are lots of bad men in the world who go about taking advantage of little girls like you. Now, to protect you, I'm going to sign a paper with you—in that paper we will say that three years from to-day our marriage shall be announced. I've had the paper all ready for some time. (*Taking legal-looking document from pocket.*) Here it is. (*Opening it—pointing to place on it.*) You sign your name here—I'll sign mine just below it. (*Takes fountain pen from pocket.*)

ROSE—(*Hesitating.*) But—I don't see no use in our doing all this. (*Taking pen, he holds it out insistently.*) Of course, as long as you want me to, I'll do it, but, honestly, it seems foolish to me.

KNOWLES—(*Pointing to line on paper, which he has folded so that she cannot see the contents.*) Right there. (*She signs her name.*) That's right. (*She is about to take paper and look at it.*) No, don't do that. There is so much in the paper we won't have time to read it now. After we are married, to-morrow, you shall have a copy of the paper to keep with you always.

ROSE—(*Dreamily.*) "After we are married!" I wonder if you men know all that word means to us? I wonder if you ever stop to think what our going away with you men means? Leaving all we ever loved, to go into strange places, among strange people? I wonder if you ever *could* realize just what we expect of you? I'm putting all my trust in you (*places her arms about his neck*), and I'm going with you, without knowing anything about where I'm going or what I'm going to do. You wouldn't deceive me, would you? You wouldn't ask me to go unless you really loved me, would you? You wouldn't want me to give up all I have here unless you wanted to give me something better in the place you're going to take me, would you?

KNOWLES—(*Holding her close to him.*) No, dear—I *do* love you and I'm going to take care of you, always. (*Looking at watch.*) Can you get ready and meet me at the foot of the mountain in half an hour?

ROSE—(*Almost in tears, looking about the room.*) Yes—I think so.

KNOWLES—Good; then I'll go now, get a rig ready and meet you, just as soon as I have explained my disappearance to the posse. (*Starts for door.*) Don't bother to take anything with you. We'll buy everything you'll need in New York, to-morrow.

ROSE—(*Tearfully.*) Can't I take nothin'?

KNOWLES—Of course, you foolish little girl. I meant no clothes or anything like that. (*Holds out his arms to her—she runs to him.*) Good-bye, little sweetheart—just for a little while. I'll meet you in half an hour. (*Kisses her and exits.*)

Rose stands just where he has left her, looking after him. After a moment she turns, looks around the room, sobs and falls in front of fireplace, burying her face in the bearskin rug.

After a moment she gets up, goes to the table and writes a letter, which she places in a conspicuous place on the table.

She then takes her hat from the peg, puts it on, takes down her coat, gives one last look around the room, sees her mother's picture on the mantelpiece, goes to it, takes it up, kisses it and, sobbingly, goes to door without looking back again, placing the picture in her bosom as she does so. Exits.

There is a moment's pause, then the curtain falls.

CURTAIN

ACT II

Scene—A nicely furnished drawing-room in a flat in the West Forties, New York City.

Time—Three years after the first act.

Discovered—Amy, the colored maid servant, in the act of opening a large box containing a new dress. She draws it out, holds it up and admires it, shaking her head as she notices it is not quite finished. After a moment, Rose enters from the door at side of room.

ROSE—Has the dress come yet, Amy?

AMY—Ya'as, indeed, Missie. It suah has, but it don' look to me as if de lad-y wot done de work had finished it.

ROSE—(*Going toward her and looking at dress.*) She certainly has not. What am I going to do now? I wanted that dress for to-night—for a particular reason.

AMY—Ah dunno, Missie. Mebbe you kin git her on the telephone and tell her to come on over an' fix it.

ROSE—She hasn't a telephone number. I think you'll have to go over yourself and ask her to come. Will you?

AMY—Of co'se ah will. Jes' giv' me de numbah ob her apahtment an' ah'll have her heah in no time 'tall.

ROSE—467 West 58th Street.

AMY—Does you all want me to go right dis minute?

ROSE—Yes. Have you anything else to do?

AMY—Well, I aint got de dinna all ready yit—'sides, ah don't like to leave you alone heah.

ROSE—That's right. I don't like to be left alone—now. (*Looking at dress critically.*) Perhaps I can fix it myself, Amy. You know I can sew pretty well, and I'm learning to do so better, every day.

AMY—Yas'em, ah knows. You suah does do ev'ting you tries, mighty hahd. Ah nevah did see a lady what studied more books dan you do. (*Laughs.*) Mah goodness! Ef ah had de larnin' you have, ah'd suah set mahself up as a school-teacher.

ROSE—(*Smiles.*) Well, you see, Amy, when I came to New York three years ago, I didn't know very much, and I've had to learn to keep up with the rest of the people here. I've had to do it all myself, too, because—well, I was ashamed to let any one know how ignorant I really was.

AMY—Yas'em. Ah feels dat a way mahself sometimes, but ah's nevah ashamed of mahself—

no sah! Why, dey tells me ah speaks de English langwidge de bestus' of any of dem chillens of mah moth'ahs. Yas, sah! Ah's some Englisher, ah is.

ROSE—(*Smiles.*) Yes, you do speak the language very well indeed, Amy. Has Mr. Knowles telephoned to say what time he was coming home?

AMY—No, ma'am, he aint.

ROSE—Oh, well, he will be home early to-night—I know that. There is so much to happen to-night, Amy. Oh, I wish I could tell you all about it. I'm so happy! This is the third anniversary of my marriage.

AMY—My, my! Is dat so? Well, well—no one would evah believe dat you been done married foh dat long. Why, you all don't look like moah dan a little gal yit.

ROSE—Well, I'm not very old, Amy.

AMY—(*Goes to door leading to hall.*) Ah thinks ah heah Mr. Knowles a comin'.

ROSE—Oh, I don't want to see him now. I want to be all dressed up before he sees me. (*Picks up dress quickly and starts for door.*) You'd better go into the kitchen and finish the dinner and I'll try and fix the dress. If I can't, I'll let you know, and you can run over to the dressmaker's house quickly. Don't say anything to Mr. Knowles about the new dress, I want to surprise him. (*Exits quickly.*)

(Amy gathers up box quickly and leaves the room on the other side of the stage.)

The noise of a key is heard in the door. After a moment, enter Howard Knowles. He looks very nervous. Comes in very quietly, makes sure there is no one there; looks around, sees the decorations Rose has placed about the room, looks puzzled. Goes over, listens at Rose's door, then crosses to door leading to kitchen, listens there. Satisfied that he will be alone, he takes off coat, throws it on chair near the door, goes to writing desk, sits down, takes revolver from his pocket, lays it on the desk in front of him, then takes wallet from his pocket. Hastily counts the large amount of yellow-backed bills it contains, smiles. Goes to room on opposite side of stage to where Rose made her exit, goes quickly in and returns with a suit case and numerous clothes, which he hurriedly packs in it. All through this he is listening carefully for the least sound. When the suit case is packed, he puts on his overcoat, takes up suit case and starts for door. Just as he reaches door, the telephone bell rings. He stops, listens, and then quickly crosses and takes receiver off the hook. Holds it to ear, and, in reply to what is evidently said, snaps his fingers several times.

He then hangs up the receiver very quietly, starts to pick up dress suit case again, and as he does so, there is a low knock on the door leading to the hall.

He drops the suit case, crosses quickly to door, taking revolver out of his pocket as he does so. After listening for a moment, the knock is repeated, a little bit louder. Then a voice is heard—softly.)

VOICE—(*Outside door.*) Howard—let me in. It's Alice.

HOWARD—(*Shows his annoyance, but thrusts revolver in his pocket—speaks through the door, softly.*) I'll see you outside.

ALICE—(*Pounding on door this time, and speaking louder.*) No—no! I must get inside—quick!

HOWARD—Wait a moment. (*Quickly crosses to Rose's door, listens, hears nothing; returns to hall door and opens it.*)

ALICE—(*Enters, holding open telegram.*) Howard! What do you mean by this? (*Indicating telegram.*)

HOWARD—Ssh! What's the matter? I explained everything.

ALICE—What's the matter with you? There was a matinee this afternoon, and I only got this telegram an hour ago. What do you mean by this? (*Indicating telegram.*) "I am going away indefinitely—will write later."

HOWARD—Isn't the telegram plain enough? How did you find this place?

ALICE—I went to your office and found it closed, but the janitor told me where you lived.

Say, what are you trying to do—throw me down?

HOWARD—Why, no, dear. I've simply got to get away on imperative business.

ALICE—*Business!* (*Her voice rises.*)

HOWARD—Ssh!

ROSE—(*Off stage.*) Amy!

AMY—(*Off stage.*) Yas, ma'am.

ROSE—You'd better go over to Mrs. Smith's and tell her I simply must have her over here to-night. I can't fix this.

AMY—Yas, ma'am. You all tell Mr. Knowles he'll have to wait a few minutes foh his dinna.

ROSE—(*Laughing.*) All right, I will. Mr. Knowles won't mind. Hurry.

(*The door is heard to slam off stage, then some one is heard running down the hall, the door is heard to open and Rose calls.*)

ROSE—Wait a minute, Amy. I'm going down to see Mrs. Archer a moment. (*The door is heard to shut again, and there is silence. During this, Howard has grasped Alice by the wrists and is holding her absolutely quiet. She glares at him as the door closes.*)

ALICE—So! Keepin' another flat, are you? That's the reason you wanted to get away, is it?

HOWARD—Now, don't be silly. It's because I am keeping another flat that I'm doing what I am.

I've wanted to break away for a long time, ever since I knew you. I've made a raise, but in doing so, I've got myself into trouble. I've simply got to get away from here.

ALICE—I think you're a liar. (*Passionately throwing her arms about his neck.*) Oh, Howard! Who is it that is dearer to you than I?

HOWARD—No one, I tell you. (*Pushing her away from him and looking at watch.*) Look here, Alice, can't you understand I've got to get away from here before any one comes back?

ALICE—What—and leave me? No, no, sweetheart. You must not. Why, I've been everything to you, even wife, except in name. My life without you would be like an unlighted candle. Be my match and I'll burn my life out for you.

HOWARD—Oh, I know all about that. But I've got to get away. I tell you, if I stay here, I'll go to prison.

ALICE—(*Backing away, surprised.*) To prison!

HOWARD—Yes, and for five or ten years.

ALICE—My God! What have you done?

HOWARD—I got a chance at fifty thousand dollars to-day, from a wealthy client, and took it. If he catches on to the fact that I'm gone, it's all off. I've got to get away to-night. I can't take you with me, but I can send for you in a little while.

ALICE—Not on your life. I'm going with you.

HOWARD—You say you love me.—I want to see how much you love me. (*Putting his arms about her.*) If you love me, you trust me—if you don't trust me, you don't love me. Will you stand by me?

ALICE—I've told you I would, and to prove it, I'm going with you. In this kind of a game, a woman can do so much.

HOWARD—A woman is useless when she's cornered. I can't take any chances on having you go all to pieces if we're caught.

ALICE—Oh, slush! In my profession I am rated as an artistic dancer. Three years ago I took a run at the legit., as you know. That's what took me up to Lake George, where I met you. I wanted to study some of the local characters. I studied one—one that you knew, too. You talk about a woman going to pieces when she's cornered. Ha! It is to laugh! Do you remember little Rose Noble?

HOWARD—(*Starts and looks quickly at her.*) Rose Noble—of course I do.

ALICE—You were rather sweet on her, weren't you?

HOWARD—Nonsense!

ALICE—I suppose you thought, like all the

others, that she was just a sweet little innocent country maid—didn't you?

HOWARD—I don't know that I ever really thought of her.

ALICE—Don't lie to me, Howard! Well, never mind. She gave me the scare of my life one night.

HOWARD—How so?

ALICE—Do you remember the night they were looking for that hotel thief?

HOWARD—Of course I do.

ALICE—Well, just to show you that all women—even innocent ones—or those that people *think* are innocent—don't go to pieces, as you express it, I'll tell you what she did. When the detectives and the posse were looking for the thief—her lover—she hid him in her bed, and he escaped.

HOWARD—(*Startled.*) How do you know?

ALICE—I saw him.

HOWARD—You did?

ALICE—I did. She had him shut up in her folding bed, and when he got almost smothered, the bed fell open, and he rolled out on the floor.

HOWARD—(*With deep feeling.*) Well, I'll be damned!

ALICE—Surprises you, don't it? Now, if I haven't got as much courage as this Rose Noble, I'll eat my shirt, and—I'm going with you!

HOWARD—(*Quickly.*) You can't. You've nothing ready.

ALICE—Now, don't you worry about that. With fifty thousand dollars in your kick, I guess you can get what I need at the first stop. Just give me time to pack my grip, and I'll meet you at the station. But don't try to get away without me, 'cause if you do, I'll have the police on your track before you can even get from here to the train.

HOWARD—(*Making up his mind.*) All right. Meet me at the Pennsylvania Station at eleven-thirty to-night, and we'll start. (*Looking at watch.*) It's just eight now—that'll give you plenty of time to go and get your things ready. But—keep your mouth shut.

ALICE—All right. (*The outer door is heard to open and close. Rose is heard singing.*)

HOWARD—(*To Alice.*) Quick! Get out this way. (*Takes her quickly to door, opens it, pushes her outside and closes door after her. After a moment, Rose enters, sees Howard standing near door with his coat on.*)

ROSE—(*Going towards him.*) Oh, Howard, I'm so glad you've come. You're awfully late, but (*with a laugh*) perhaps it's just as well, for dinner is late, too. (*Putting her arms about*

him.) I wanted to surprise you with something, but I guess I can't now.

HOWARD—(*Coldly pushing her away.*) Oh, stop all this foolishness, Rose.

ROSE—Why, Howard! (*Tenderly.*) What's the matter, dear? Tired? Well, we'll have an evening all to ourselves to-night. You haven't forgotten what to-night means to me, have you?

HOWARD—I know what it means to me if I don't get away from here pretty soon.

ROSE—(*Disappointed.*) What? Going out again to-night? Oh, Howard, no. Surely, dear, you won't leave me alone to-night!

HOWARD—What's to-night got to do with it?

ROSE—Why, dear, to-night is our third anniversary—the night we were to have such a good time. The night you were to acknowledge before all the world that I was your wife.

HOWARD—(*Coldly.*) What if I've changed my mind?

ROSE—(*Laughing.*) Oh, you could hardly do that, Howard. I *am* your wife, you know.

HOWARD—Could you prove it?

ROSE—Prove it? (*Nervously.*) Why—why—I suppose I could if I had to, but—(*looking closely at him*) but—— Why, what is the matter with you to-night, Howard? You have never acted like this before?

HOWARD—Well, I never knew some of the things before that I learned to-day. You're a nice one, you are. Passing yourself off as a nice, sweet child—taking me in—me—of all people in the world. This is one time in my life that I got stung good. You! The innocent mountain maid. You! The sweet, little girl that all the neighbors thought so pure and unprotected. You! Taking in an old hand like me. (*Laughs sarcastically.*) You're all right, little one. I guess you can take care of yourself when I'm gone.

ROSE—(*Who has been listening in amazement to this tirade.*) Howard! What on earth are you talking about?

HOWARD—Oh, that's right, play the innocent girl some more. It's a good thing for me that I didn't marry you——

ROSE—(*Interrupting.*) Didn't marry me? What do you mean?

HOWARD—I mean just what I say. You are not married to me!

ROSE—(*Not realizing he is in earnest, laughs nervously.*) You—you—you are in such a strange mood to-night, Howard. I never knew you to joke like this before.

HOWARD—Oh, you think it's a joke, do you?

ROSE—(*Seriously.*) Why, what else could it

be? We *were* married three years ago to-night, and we were to wait until this time before we would let any one know of it. Why, you signed a paper in which you stated this was to be the case.

HOWARD—(*Sneeringly.*) Oh, I did, did I? Did you read the paper *you* signed?

ROSE—Of course I didn't. I trusted you.

HOWARD—Have you got a marriage certificate to prove that we were married?

ROSE—(*At last becoming frightened.*) Howard! Stop! I don't like these kind of jokes. You know I haven't any certificate——

HOWARD—Of course you haven't. There wasn't any. We were *not* married three years ago to-night. We were never married! That ceremony we went through was just one to satisfy a very foolish little girl—or what I thought was a very innocent little girl. The man who performed the so-called ceremony was a friend of mine, used for that occasion only.

ROSE—(*Looking at him in horror.*) My God!

HOWARD—The paper you signed had nothing to do with a promise of marriage.

ROSE—Oh! Don't say these things, Howard! You don't know—you don't know what you are saying. We are married, dear—say it, please say it! You don't know what it means to me. Can't you see what has happened? (*Going*

to work-basket quickly, and getting out a little white dress—holds it up.)

HOWARD—What's that?

ROSE—Can't you see? Can't you understand we *must* be married! Oh, Howard! Say that you don't mean all you've been saying to me to-night.

HOWARD—(*At last recognizing that it is a baby's dress she is holding up for his inspection—looks at her coldly.*) Who's the father?

ROSE—(*Almost fainting at the insult, but with indignation.*) Howard! (*In tears.*) Oh, I've been counting on the happiness this little soul would bring to us both! And now—now——(*Breaks down entirely.*)

HOWARD—Now—now—what? You've taken me in just as badly as I've taken you in. What about your other—lover?

ROSE—Other lover? What do you mean?

HOWARD—How about the man you had concealed in your bed—three years ago to-night?

ROSE—Man—bed—three years ago——

HOWARD—Oh, don't try to play the innocent kid any longer. I know all about it. I know that you concealed your crook lover from the men who were hunting him, the very night you and I left the Black Mountain. I know the only reason you came with me so willingly was

to be near him here in New York. Don't tell me I haven't been taken in. I know better. I was going away to-night, but I was going to see that you were taken care of while I was gone; but by God—your lover, the father of your baby—can take care of you now. If he will!

ROSE—(*Furious.*) Stop! You know, deep down in your own heart, there is not a word of truth in anything you have said. You know I have been as true a wife to you as any woman could be to a man. If you have deceived me, as you say you have, you have done something that God will punish you for when His time comes. There has been no other man, and you know it. I don't know what your object is in all this—but I do know you must have some plan in your filthy mind to make you act in this manner. If it is your will to leave me, do so, but do not dare carry your insults any further, or, so help me God, I'll kill you where you stand—with my bare hands, if I must. (*He starts to say something.*) No—you've had your say—it's my turn now. There was a man in my cabin the night you speak of—a poor hunted creature looking for protection from a mob of maddened men. I *did* conceal him in my bed, because there was no other place for him to hide. There was but one person who knew of this besides

myself—a woman who came there to warn me against you—because she wanted you herself, perhaps. That man I have never seen since—and you know it. That man has never entered my life—had never entered my life, but compared to you—thief though he was—he was a nobleman. What the paper was that I signed, I know not, nor care not, I only know I have trusted you as only a woman can trust the man she loves. I have not proved unworthy—you have—and if there is justice in this world, my worthiness will be proven and yours will be punished. You have given me a place to live and have fooled me into believing you were giving me affection to go with it. You try to make me suffer for your sins—well and good. I will suffer my shame alone—not with you. What you have given me, I will give back to you. You may go where you will, so will I. You may do as you will—so will I. From this time on I am *not* your wife—even though I believe you lie when you say we are not married. Go your way—I'll go mine—and may our paths never cross again. (*Goes to door of her room.*)

HOWARD—(*Picking up suit case.*) I'll take you at your word—Mistress! (*Exit.*)

ROSE—(*Half fainting against door of her room.*) Howard! (*Amy enters.*)

AMY—She am comin' ovah in jes' a little while
—— (*Notices Rose's condition.*) Ma Gawd,
chile! Wot's de mattah?

ROSE—(*Regaining control of herself.*) Amy,
go into my writing desk and get me a little red
book you will find there. Bring it here.

AMY—Yas'm. (*Exits quickly, returning at once
with book.*) Is dis it?

ROSE—(*Taking book.*) Yes. (*Opens it, takes
out a little piece of crumpled paper, gives it to Amy.*)
Do you know where that street is, Amy?

AMY—(*Opening paper and reads.*) Jimmie
Saunders, 23 Rivington Street, New York.
Yas'm, ah does. It's away down on de Eas' side.

ROSE—(*Firmly.*) Pack me a few things in my
satchel. I'm going away.

AMY—Goin' away? Mah goodness! Whuffo?

ROSE—And I won't be back.

AMY—(*More and more amazed.*) Look heah,
woman. Is you crazy?

ROSE—Not yet—but I would be if I stayed
here. (*Breaking down.*) Oh, my God! About
to become a mother—deserted—alone—deceived!
(*Sinks down on the floor in a wild abandon of tears.
Amy stands above her, perfectly amazed.*)

CURTAIN

ACT III

Scene—A handsomely furnished room in a side-street hotel in the Times Square district, New York. The entire place has an atmosphere of the theatre. There are several trunks, partially packed, around the room. There is a "Three Sheet" on the back wall showing a figure in Oriental costume, and posed as for dancing. Photographs of celebrities of the theatrical world adorn the mantelpiece and walls.

Time—Three years after the second act.

Discovered—The stage is empty. After a moment the door opens and Alice Winslow enters. She is dressed in street costume. She looks about the disordered room, makes a movement of anger, and calls:

ALICE—Amy! Amy!

AMY—(*Enters slowly from bedroom door.*)
Yas'm. Heah I is.

ALICE—Why haven't you picked up this room? I never saw such a looking place in my life. What do you suppose I hired you for, if not to look after my things a little bit! You know these trunks have to go to the theatre to-night—dress rehearsal to-morrow, and not a thing ready!

AMY—You all done tol' me not to finish packing until dat udder dress come.

ALICE—Hasn't that got here yet?

AMY—No, ma'am, hit aint.

ALICE—That's what I get for giving my work out to a bum costume concern. Call 'em up and ask 'em why it aint here. No, wait a moment, and help me get out of these things of mine. (*Starts to take off outer wraps.*) Get me my kimono—the red one—and the slippers to match. Gee, I'm tired, believe me. (*Sits down, taking off gloves.*) Any messages?

AMY—One telephone message. A Mister—Mister—Reynolds called up.

ALICE—(*Eagerly.*) He did? What did he want?

AMY—Done sed he wanted to see you all. Said to be sure and tell you he was a-goin' back to Chicago to-night and wanted to see you before he left. Sed he'd call you up a little latah and talk to you all his se'f.

ALICE—Well, I wouldn't miss him for a good deal. He's that Chicago manager I've been talking about. Wants me to go out there and open a new theatre he's interested in. Says if I make good he'll see that I have a company of my own on the Columbia time. (*Amy is removing her shoes and puts on slippers.*) Ha! Wonder

what old Howard would say if he knew I was goin' to be a star! (*Rises and goes behind screen, puts on kimono, talking all the time.*) Gee, Amy, talk about a man going to the bad! Suffering cats! He was the limit—never could quit drinking long enough to give himself a chance to get a thirst. (*Coming out from behind the screen and seating herself in front of dressing table.*) He was a good spender, I'll say that for him. (*Laughs.*) Amy, when I get a good spender around, I can certainly show him more places to leave money than any woman I know. (*Takes off pearl necklace.*) See this? That's one of his presents. It's real stuff, too. Cost him a small part of his fifty thousand, believe me.

AMY—(*Admiring necklace.*) My, my! Ah al—was done thought those was imitations.

ALICE—Not on your life! The real things! I aint got many real things, so I take mighty good care of what I have got.

AMY—While I was cleanin' out one o' dem trunks dis aftahnoon, ah cum across a bundle o' papahs dat was mahked Howard Knowles. Heah dey is. (*Hands papers to Alice.*)

ALICE—(*Takes them, looks carelessly at them and throws them down on the table.*) I guess they aint anything important. If they was, he'd never have left 'em with me. Gee, I haven't

seen him since I shook him in London. He got too much for me. You can burn 'em to-morrow. (*Telephone bell rings. Amy answers it.*)

AMY—Yas. Who is dis? (*Turning to Alice.*) Mistah Reynolds is callin'.

ALICE—(*Making a rush for the 'phone.*) Let me at him. (*Softly into 'phone.*) Hello. Yes. Why, of course. How soon can you come? Yes, I'll see you sure. In fifteen minutes? Come right up in the elevator. All right. Good-bye. (*Hangs up receiver—to Amy:*) Come on, kid, make a general hustle. I want to look like the Queen of Sheba in just ten minutes. (*Sits herself in front of glass, and Amy does her hair.*)

AMY—I uster to know a Mr. Howard Knowles.

ALICE—(*Not paying much attention to her.*) That so? When?

AMY—'Bout tree yeahs ergo. Ah used to wuk foh him an' he's wife.

ALICE—Go on—he never had a wife.

AMY—He suah did. An' he had a baby, too—but he nevah did see it.

ALICE—(*Laughs coarsely.*) That wasn't his baby any more than the woman was his wife.

AMY—(*Indignantly.*) Don' you s'pose ah knows what ah's talkin' about? You all don' suppose ah'd a wuked foh a lady an' huh husban' dat wuzn't married? No suh! Ah wuz decent

den. Dat man dun run off wid some woman an' lef' dat poh li'l gal all alone. She des pulled out of dat house dat same night.

ALICE—How do you know she had a baby?

AMY—Mah Gawd, woman, don' you s'pose ah knows de symptoms? 'Sides, ah met huh on de street a while back. She wuz looking putty bad, too. She done tol' me de baby died. (*During this conversation Alice is dressing in evening dress, placing the necklace around her neck the last thing.*)

ALICE—Did she tell you where she was living?

AMY—No, ma'am. She didn't. She did tell me dat she was a makin' dresses foh a livin'—but ah reckon she wasn't makin' many f'om de looks of her. (*Telephone rings. Amy answers it.*)

AMY—De office says dat Mr. Reynolds is a-comin' up.

ALICE—All right. Clear up some of this mess and then go down and telephone the costumers that the dress hasn't come.

(*Buzzer of door is heard. Amy Picks up bundle of clothes and dashes for the next room. Alice goes to door and opens it.*)

ALICE—Come on right in, Mr. Reynolds. I'm so glad to see you. It was mighty nice of you to call before leaving for Chicago. (*Enter Jimmie*

Saunders, dressed in the height of fashion, and posing as Reynolds.)

REYNOLDS—(*Shaking her hand.*) It's awfully good of you to see me, after your day of hard work. I couldn't resist once more talking to you.

ALICE—Oh, we're good friends enough for an evening call, I guess. Let me take your hat and coat.

SAUNDERS—Thanks. (*Removes coat, which she takes and places on couch near door.*)

ALICE—Will you have a drink?

SAUNDERS—Well, for friendship's sake—yes.

ALICE—(*Pours out whiskey—seltzer—gives it to him.*) Here's to our health and happiness! (*After pouring herself out a drink.*)

SAUNDERS—(*Touching her glass with his.*) *Prosit!* (*Both drink.*)

ALICE—(*Takes empty glasses—puts them on table.*) Have you decided when your theatre is to open?

SAUNDERS—That's one of the things I wanted to talk to you about. (*Looking about.*) You have nice quarters here.

ALICE—Oh, yes—they're nice and quiet—and the office never bothers any of the guests. (*Significantly.*)

SAUNDERS—You look as if you were going away.

ALICE—No, just getting ready for the rehearsal

to-morrow. Say, if this thing turns out a failure—you'll have to give me a job sure.

SAUNDERS—If this thing turns out a failure, we'll open our new theatre with a company headed by you. How's that?

ALICE—Sounds pretty good to me.

SAUNDERS—I want to get some stuff ready for our press department, so I'm going to interview you (*laughingly*) like a real reporter. You don't mind?

ALICE—Mind? Not on your life. Can you do it?

SAUNDERS—Well, I guess. When I was a little bit younger, I was on the staff of one of the leading papers of the country. (*Business with notebook.*) Are you married?

ALICE—Well—I was—once.

SAUNDERS—Do you consider yourself pretty?

ALICE—That's a question only my friends can answer. What do you think?

SAUNDERS—(*Looking at her, then writing and reading aloud as he writes.*) Hair, red as a smoky sun shimmering on a placid lake and sinking in its bosom; eyes that flash from violet to green-gray, and from innocence to coquetry, dazzling and bewitching with their limpidness; skin as blue-white as frozen milk, and with the freshness of babyhood; and a body as straight and majestic as a pine; lithe as hot swamp grass

in an August wind—in fact, she's a dream of loveliness, so wonderful one would desire to sleep forever rather than awaken to realize it *was* but a dream——

ALICE—Say—you're some writer, and the funny thing about it is—you seem to know what you're talking about. If I wasn't a lady, I'd let you kiss me for that.

SAUNDERS—Well, of course——

ALICE—(*Going towards him.*) You know, sometimes, we ladies forget our bringing up and——

SAUNDERS—(*Taking her in his arms.*) And—(*kisses her*) and—don't regret it, eh?

ALICE—(*With her arms about his neck, seated on his knee.*) Well, that depends upon the other person, you know.

SAUNDERS—Well, if I'm the other person referred to, you won't regret it, believe me. (*Taking notebook up again—she still sitting on his knee.*) Got a lot of costumes?

ALICE—Five trunks full.

SAUNDERS—Not enough—you must have at least thirty.

ALICE—Good Lord! What for?

SAUNDERS—Just for the advertising man to talk about.

ALICE—Not a bad idea.

SAUNDERS—Got any special stuff——

ALICE—What d'ye mean?

SAUNDERS—Oh, for example—one of the other leading dancers is having designs in oil, painted on her bare legs——

ALICE—Who is it?

SAUNDERS—Gertrude Hoffman.

ALICE—(*Sarcastically.*) There'll be no room for the paint. Gee, look at the way that dame went up—why, just a few years ago she was in the same chorus with me!

SAUNDERS—Well, cheer up—you're both out of it. (*With apparent indifference.*) Ever been robbed of your jewels?

ALICE—Not yet—but I have hopes. (*Laughs.*)

SAUNDERS—Well, perhaps we can help you. (*Laughs.*)

ALICE—I've got enough of 'em—use 'em in my dances.

SAUNDERS—Oh, I don't mean that phony stuff. I'm talking about the *real*.

ALICE—(*Indignantly.*) Well, now, don't think I've never had any real. Here! (*Indicating.*) This necklace of pearls is worth real money. How do I know? Ha! Bought 'em myself with the money——

SAUNDERS—With what money?

ALICE—Never mind—they're genuine enough

for any press agent's stunt—only—no press agent or any one else is ever going to get near enough to them to do that robbery act.

SAUNDERS—(*Bending over and admiring jewels.*) They certainly are fine ones, all right.

ALICE—They sure are. I wouldn't have 'em, if they weren't.

SAUNDERS—Oh, they'll do well enough for the old jewel-robbery story. We'll work it up in good shape. We'll say they were given to you by King So-and-So who fell in love with your classic charms and——

ALICE—(*Laughing.*) Oh, I say! You sure are all right, all right!

SAUNDERS—And if he didn't marry you——

ALICE—What?

SAUNDERS—By all laws he *should* have done so.

ALICE—Say, that's some hot stuff!

SAUNDERS—Well, you know in these days, we have to have things spicy.

ALICE—(*Fondling pearls.*) A robber would make a good haul here, if he knew the truth; but who on earth would ever expect an actress to have *real* jewels? (*Saunders eying the necklace hungrily. Amy enters.*)

AMY—'Scuse me, Miss, for 'ruptin', but ah can't get reply out o' de costumers yo' all tol' me to call up.

ALICE—What's the matter?

AMY—Ah dunno. Dey jes' don' answer, dat's all.

ALICE—Well, get on your things and run around and see them. Tell 'em that thing must be delivered here to-night.

AMY—Yas'm. (*Exit.*)

ALICE—Darn these people anyway! Never on time with anything. I'll bet they never get another job from me.

SAUNDERS—(*Looking around.*) You seem to have all the comforts of a home here—telephone, electric light.

ALICE—Well, why not—I pay enough for the place.

SAUNDERS—(*Taking out cigarette case.*) Do you mind if I smoke?

ALICE—I should say not. I'll have one myself. You'll find the matches on the table.

SAUNDERS—(*Going to table, picks up box of matches and hides it in his pocket.*) I can't seem to see any.

ALICE—I'll bet that darned girl has forgotten them again. Wait a minute. I'll get some in the other room. (*Exits quickly.*)

(*As soon as she has left, Saunders takes pliers out of pocket and quickly disconnects telephone wires, hiding ends so they cannot be seen.*)

ALICE—(*Re-enters.*) Here we are. (*Lights match, holds it to his cigarette, then lights her own.*)

SAUNDERS—(*Seats himself on sofa and pulls her down beside him.*) We might as well be comfortable while we finish our chat.

ALICE—I'm willing.

SAUNDERS—Before I go, I want to sign contracts with you—merely optional ones, you understand—in case the new play fails. I've got some all ready in my pocket. (*He slyly slips clasp of necklace, so that when she gets up it will fall to the floor.*)

ALICE—Yes,—all right—but what about salary?

SAUNDERS—Anything within reason—and your name in big letters all over the place.

ALICE—Three hundred a week—and traveling expenses.

SAUNDERS—You're on. (*Rises, crosses to table—she follows him—the necklace drops to floor.*) Put your name to these. (*Pulls papers out of pocket.*)

ALICE—Not without reading them—no, sir. I was caught once and had to buy shoes, slippers and tights.

SAUNDERS—(*Drops his handkerchief and picks up necklace with it.*) Oh, all right—look 'em over to-night, insert the salary and then mail 'em to me to-morrow. I'll be already for them in

Chicago. Send them to the Princess Theatre.
(*Looks at watch.*)

ALICE—You haven't got to go so soon, have you?

SAUNDERS—Just time to catch the train.

ALICE—(*Gets his coat.*) I'm sorry. I thought you would stay all evening. (*As her back is turned, he pockets bundle of papers that Amy has laid there early in the act.*)

SAUNDERS—When I get back from Chicago, I'll stay as long as you like.

ALICE—(*Helping him on with his coat.*) All right, Mister man. If you're as good as you look, we'll have *some* times together.

SAUNDERS—(*Putting his arm around her.*) You don't mind me kissing you good-bye?

ALICE—Good Lord, man—no—I like it.
(*Kisses him heartily.*)

SAUNDERS—Be sure and send contracts to-morrow. (*Exits.*)

(*After he has gone, Alice goes to table, lights fresh cigarette and seats herself near table, placing her feet on it. After a moment, there is a knock at the door. She listens a moment, then rises with a pleased look, opens door. Howard Knowles enters quickly, closing and locking door quickly behind him.*)

ALICE—*You!*

KNOWLES—Yes, me. Glad to see me, aren't you—not!

ALICE—Where did you come from?

KNOWLES—Now that's a nice welcome for a hungry lover.

ALICE—What do you want?

KNOWLES—Well, first of all, I want a kiss.
(*Attempts to embrace her.*)

ALICE—(*Evading him.*) Not on your life. I told you in London, when I left you, I was through with you for good.

KNOWLES—I know you did, but I didn't tell you I was through with you.

ALICE—How did you ever dare to come back to New York? If the police get onto you, you'll get four or five years—or more—for the old game.

KNOWLES—Yes, but the police aren't going to get onto me. Oh, you don't dare let on I'm here, for as sure as I'm sent up, you'll go with me. You had your share of the loot all right—you're an accomplice.

ALICE—What do you want? Money?

KNOWLES—You bet.

ALICE—How much?

KNOWLES—Well, a thousand will do right now.

ALICE—You're crazy! Where would I get a thousand dollars?

KNOWLES—From the new lover—the one who just left here. Play him for a sucker—just as you did me.

ALICE—Not much. He's nothing to me. He's a theatrical manager looking for a new face to feature.

KNOWLES—Sell the pearls you bought with my five thousand.

ALICE—(*Instinctively putting hand to throat.*) Not much! (*Frightened pause—in whisper.*) My God! Where are they—I had 'em on. (*Hastily looks about on floor, on couch, etc.*)

KNOWLES—Come on—none of that comedy business—no bluff—you know where they are all right.

ALICE—(*Paying no attention to him.*) I tell you I had 'em on not ten minutes ago. (*Looks at him angrily.*) You dirty dog! You stole them off my neck when you tried to kiss me. Give 'em back or ——

KNOWLES—Give them back! (*Angrily.*) Look here—what do you think I am, a baby? Those hard-luck tales don't go with me. I might have been easy several years—but no more. I haven't seen your pearls.

ALICE—You lie! Give 'em up or I'll call the police. (*Starts for 'phone.*)

KNOWLES—(*Stops her forcibly, knocking the*

end of the cut wires to floor as he does so.) Don't you do it, you devil!

ALICE—(*Seeing cut wires.*) My God! I see your game, you coward! (*Throws piece of bric-a-brac through the window.*)

KNOWLES—(*Grabs her arm just too late, and swings her around, away from window.*) If that brings anybody up here, and you squeal, I'll choke the life out of you. (*Grasping her throat.*) Are you going to give me away?

ALICE—(*Faintly.*) No.

(*There is a knock at the door. They both stand absolutely silent. Knowles points revolver at door. A louder and more insistent knock is heard. Knowles looks around quickly, sees portières leading to next room—motions for her to reply. He sneaks over quietly toward portières.*)

ALICE—Well—what is it?

OFFICER FLANNAGAN—(*Outside.*) Lemme in.

ALICE—I'm not dressed yet. Wait a moment.

KNOWLES—(*In a whisper.*) I'm going to hide here—if you squeal, I'll do you first and him afterwards. (*Hides behind curtains.*)

FLANNAGAN—(*Pounding on door with his club.*) Open the door or I'll bust it in!

ALICE—(*Hastily throws a dressing gown over her dress and goes to door, throwing it open.*) Come in.

FLANNAGAN—(*Enters, revolver in hand.*) What's the matter?

ALICE—(*Hesitates.*) Why—nothing—now.

FLANNAGAN—Well, what was the matter?

ALICE—Some one stole some of my jewels. (*Pointing to telephone.*) When I tried to call up the office, I found the wires had been cut.

FLANNAGAN—(*Looking at 'phone.*) Clever work—a getaway.

ALICE—What's a "getaway"?

FLANNAGAN—The work of a slippery professional who makes his plans to get away before he starts his job. (*Looks around the room.*) Which way did he go?

ALICE—Who?

FLANNAGAN—Why, the feller that stole the stuff.

ALICE—I don't know who stole it.

FLANNAGAN—Well, I'll search the place.

ALICE—No need of that. I've been all through the rooms since I missed them.

FLANNAGAN—What'd he get?

ALICE—A string of pearls—worth about five thousand dollars.

FLANNAGAN—Whew! Where were you when you missed 'em?

ALICE—Right in this room. I was talking to——

FLANNAGAN—Oh, you've had visitors, eh? Who was it?

ALICE—(*Nervously—seeing the curtains move a bit.*) Why, a Mister Reynolds, from Chicago—a theatrical manager. He's too much of a gentleman.

FLANNAGAN—Gentleman? Hu!

ALICE—(*Indignantly.*) I tell you it couldn't have been him. He was admiring the necklace just before he went away.

FLANNAGAN—Did you miss 'em right after he went?

ALICE—Not right away—I missed 'em while I was talking to——

FLANNAGAN—To who?

ALICE—(*Seeing curtains move again.*) To my maid.

FLANNAGAN—Oh, the maid, eh? Wher's she?

ALICE—Gone out on an errand. She'll be back pretty soon.

FLANNAGAN—Where'd ye meet this—manager——gentleman?

ALICE—Down in one of the theatrical managers' offices. I was just coming out and he was passing through the hall. We bumped into each other—he apologized and—well—after some conversation we went to dinner together, and he's seen me several times since.

FLANNAGAN—Did you wear those pearls any time he met you?

ALICE—Always. I'm never without them. They're good advertising.

FLANNAGAN—How do you know he's a theatrical manager?

ALICE—Didn't he offer me a job at a big salary?

FLANNAGAN—Did that prove him a manager?

ALICE—(*Indignantly.*) Of course it did. He knew a good thing when he saw it.

FLANNAGAN—Hm! (*Taking photo out of his pocket.*) What did he look like?

ALICE—Oh—he was tall—dark—smooth-faced and—

FLANNAGAN—(*Handing her photograph.*) Did he look anything like that?

ALICE—Why, yes—that's him! (*Excitedly.*) Where'd you get it?

FLANNAGAN—Well, you're stung good. That's Jimmy Saunders—gunman—one of the slickest thieves in the country. He studies his intended victim like he was goin' t' college. Can give any line of talk. A college graduate. First heard of about six years ago up on Lake George. He sure has been putting some stuff over lately—but we can't get the goods on him. He's been too slick for us.

ALICE—(*Almost crying.*) Do you mean to

say that man's a thief? What about the contracts he left for me to sign?

FLANNAGAN—Where are they?

ALICE—(*Getting them from table.*) Here. (*Opens one to read—shrieks.*) Oh—these aint contracts—they're a receipt for my pearls—he knew he'd get 'em when he came. (*Cries.*) Oh, what will I do—what will I do?

FLANNAGAN—I'll report the matter to headquarters and as soon as we can find a trace of them, I'll let you know. (*Takes out notebook.*) What's your name?

ALICE—Alice Winslow.

FLANNAGAN—What's your business?

ALICE—I'm on the stage—burlesque business.

FLANNAGAN—Living here—alone?

ALICE—(*Indignantly.*) Of course—with my maid.

FLANNAGAN—How long has she been with you?

ALICE—About three months.

FLANNAGAN—Pearl necklace—worth about five thousand dollars. (*Is busily looking at room and writing in book.*) Visitor called himself Reynolds—theatrical manager—looks like picture of Jimmy Saunders—telephone wire cut—made a get-away. (*Turning to her.*) Did you notice whether he wore gloves?

ALICE—(*Thinking hard.*) Why, yes, I did notice that he never took them off—why?

FLANNAGAN—Ha! Didn't want to leave any finger prints. (*Writing in notebook, then closing it.*) Well, I can't do any more, lady. I'll be going.

ALICE—Will you have a drink before you go?

FLANNAGAN—Well—I got a bad cough—I don't mind if I do.

ALICE—(*Gets decanter and glass.*) Help yourself.

FLANNAGAN—(*Pouring himself out a large drink—holds it up to light.*) Here's to you. (*Drinks.*)

ALICE—(*Crying again.*) Well, there's one consolation—I was robbed by a gentleman anyway.

FLANNAGAN—Well, wouldn't that get you! You women are all alike. If some old bum had robbed you, it would have been murder—but if some swell guy does the trick, it's just a social call. Good night, lady. I hope we get track of them jewels.

ALICE—If you do—(*Handing him money.*) Here's a little bit on account.

FLANNAGAN—(*Taking money.*) Lady, I'm glad to accept your insult. (*Exit.*)

(*After the door is closed, Knowles comes from behind curtain. Laughs and throws himself in a chair. She stands gazing at him indignantly.*)

KNOWLES—(*Laughing.*) So, you were the sucker—a gentleman burglar—and you an actress. Ha, ha! He put one over that time.

ALICE—Don't rub it in. Now I've kept my word and didn't give you away, what do you want?

KNOWLES—My wants are just the same as they were a few minutes ago—money.

ALICE—I haven't got much left. I'll give you what I can. (*Opens drawer to desk and takes out small roll of bills.*) Here's twenty-five dollars—that's all I can spare. If I get those pearls back I'll give you five hundred dollars—if you'll promise to go away and let me alone.

KNOWLES—For a thousand I'd promise anything.

ALICE—Well, you won't get a thousand.

KNOWLES—Oh, yes, I will. I need it. There's something else I need too, come to think of it. What did you do with that old trunk of mine we left in storage here?

ALICE—Threw it away. I had Amy clear everything out of it—there was nothing but a bunch of old clothes—

KNOWLES—What became of the papers that were in it?

ALICE—Oh, Amy saved something—she had

it here a while ago. (*Looks on table for them.*) They were here a few minutes ago.

KNOWLES—Well, if they're lost, there'll be hell to pay. Do you know what they were?

ALICE—No, how should I? I never looked at them.

KNOWLES—One of them was a real marriage certificate—the other a paper giving me the rights to as pretty a bit of oil land as you could ever find anywhere.

ALICE—A marriage certificate!

KNOWLES—Yes—mine and Rose Noble's.

ALICE—But you told me you weren't married to her.

KNOWLES—Yes, I told her the same thing—you both believed it—but I am, just the same. I need money to hunt her up—I've got to have another signature from her before I can get hold of that property. It belonged to her—but as long as she's my wife—it belongs to me, too—see?

ALICE—Is there any money in it?

KNOWLES—You don't suppose I'd be looking for her if there wasn't, do you?

ALICE—Where do I come in if you find her—and get the money?

KNOWLES—Same as before, if you like.

ALICE—*Not* on your life! I've had one taste of you—that will last me for a long, long time.

If you'll promise me a third of what you make out of it—I'll see that you'll find her.

KNOWLES—Do you know where she is?

ALICE—I may—I'm not saying until we come to some agreement.

KNOWLES—Yes—but where are the papers?

ALICE—Oh—they're all right. Amy probably put them away somewhere.

KNOWLES—If you'll help me to find Rose, I'll agree to your terms—one-third of the profits and—a new pearl necklace.

ALICE—Good.

AMY—(*Enters.*) Mah goodness, Missie—ah's 'fraid you all ain' nevah goin' t' git dat dress.

ALICE—Why not? (*Knowles recognizes Amy and keeps his back to her.*)

AMY—'Cause, dem dress makah's done gone on a strike.

ALICE—(*Furious.*) More bad luck!

AMY—Yas'm. De' done pahmed out yo' dress to some one else dat was t' deliber it back to 'em to-night—but ain' did so.

ALICE—Couldn't you get the address of this person?

AMY—Yas'm—ah did. Dey's somethin' familiah 'bout it, too. (*Takes dirty piece of paper from her pocket and reads with difficulty.*) 23 Rivington Street—Mrs. Edwards.

ALICE—Tell 'em down at the office to get me a taxi. I'm going down there myself.

AMY—Yas'm. (*Starts for telephone.*)

ALICE—You can't use the telephone—it's broken. Go downstairs, or tell the elevator boy.

AMY—Yas'm. (*Turns, and as she does, she sees Knowles.*) Ma goodness! (*Giggles.*) Ah didn't know we hed company.

ALICE—There are a lot of things you don't know.

AMY—(*Looking intently at Knowles.*) Yas'm—ah knows dey is. (*Working around so as to see his face.*) Dey's a lot ob tings ah don' wan' to know neither—but dey's some ah does. Seems to me ah seen dat back befoh so ah's a-goin' t' see dat face befo' ah goes anywah's. Tu'n roun' heah man—lemme see yo' face. (*Knowles turns and faces her.*) Mah Gawd! Ah knows you! You is Mistah Howard Knowles!

KNOWLES—(*Holding out his hand to her.*) How are you, Amy?

AMY—(*Indignantly.*) How is ah? How is ah? White man—don' you dah ask me how is ah?

KNOWLES—(*Nervously.*) Why, what's the matter with you?

AMY—Mattah wid me! Huh! Dey aint nothin' de mattah wid me. Ah jes don' caah fo' yo' company, dat's all.

ALICE—Amy, how dare you talk like that?

AMY—Look hyah, woman—don' you all git me riled. I'se a bad niggah when my spunk is touched up. Does you all know what dat man done? He's de man ah uster wuk foh—de man what run away an' leave he's wife all alone by huhse'f—jes' when he wuz needed mos'. He's dat Howard Knowles dat leave his pretty little wife to shif' foh huhse'f an run off wid anuddah woman. (*Sharply inspects Alice.*) Look hyah! Is you all dat woman?

ALICE—(*Sharply.*) Amy! How dare you talk like this?

AMY—How dah ah? Huh! Ah done ask you a question, an ef yi' don' cah to answer, dat's yo' business—but ah knows dat ah has mah s'picions. (*With great scorn.*) Dis heah man, he aint no good a'tall. He's a bahd egg, an' ah don' care to wuk fo' no lady what has him a-hangin' 'roun'. Ah guess you all kin git 'long widout me, so—good night. (*Starts to go.*)

ALICE—Wait a moment. Where are those papers you showed me early in the evening—the ones you got out of that old trunk—the ones that were addressed to Mr. Knowles?

AMY—Ah laid 'em on dat table.

HOWARD—Well, they aren't there now.

AMY—Ah don' cah whah dey is. (*Starts to go again.*)

KNOWLES—(*To Alice.*) She mustn't get away unless she tells about those papers.

ALICE—Amy! Stop! You haven't told me why you hid those papers.

AMY—Ah nevah hid dem papahs. Ah laid dem down on dat table 'cause ah was goin' to throw dem away, jes es you tole me to do. If dey is gone—you done took 'em yo' se'f. Ah'm goin' away f'um heah an' ah don't wan' to be stopped no moh. (*Looking reproachfully at Alice.*) Ah suah did think yo' wuz a la-dy, even if you has got a little spo'tin' blood in you. But ah caint fo'get dat dis heah man done lef' his pretty little wife—all alone—jes' when she needed him mos'. An' ah' don' want to 'membah dat yo' wuz de cause of him doin' hit, either, case if ah does 'membah dat, I'm liable to clean out de place. I'm black, an' I'm Lady's Maid to a Spo'tin' Queen—but ah's white compared to you two. (*Exit.*)

KNOWLES—(*Quickly goes to outside door and locks it.*) Tell her to come back this way before she goes out.

ALICE—What for?

KNOWLES—I'm going to see whether she's got those papers. I'll bet she read them and saw what they were—that's the reason she's so anxious to get away. (*Scornfully.*) Bless your

heart, it isn't because she's afraid of being contaminated by association with you and me: it's because she has a reason to get away. I'd bet a thousand dollars—if I had it—she knows where my wife is.

ALICE—Nonsense!

KNOWLES—Make some excuse to get her back here.

ALICE—All right. (*Calls:*) Amy!

AMY—(*Off stage.*) What 'sha want?

ALICE—Come in this way before you go. (*No answer.*) AMY!

AMY—(*Off stage.*) All right, ah will.

KNOWLES—Good. When she comes in, get between her and that door, and I'll cover this one. If I don't scare her to death, I'll know the reason why. (*Amy enters, carrying a telescope, fully packed, her hat on.*)

AMY—Now, what kin ah do foh you befo' ah goes?

KNOWLES—(*Standing in front of door to hall—with revolver in hand—points it at her.*) You can hand over those papers.

AMY—(*Bursts into a roar of laughter.*) Ha, ha! Dis is de funnies' ting ah evah done see in mah life! Ha, ha! (*Sobering up.*) Didn't ah tell yo' ah hadn' seen no papahs? Well, believe me when ah tells yo'dat.

KNOWLES—Alice—go through her telescope.

AMY—(*Softly, but with a growing anger.*) Alice, don't you do nothin' of de kind. Ef yo' does, ah shuah staht somethin' 'roun' heah!

KNOWLES—Come on, don't be afraid.

AMY—No, cou'se not—don' be 'fraid. Come on an' try an' take dis heah satchel away f'um me. (*Angrily to Knowles.*) Look heah, white man, I'se gettin' riled, ah is! Ef you all don' put dat little popgun in yo' pocket, ah suah is goin' to take hit away from you! Start somethin', why don' you? Go on an' shoot. (*Laughs boisterously.*) Mah Gawd! Ef dis ain' de funnies'! (*Seriously.*) Git out o' mah way yo' poh fool! I'll brek yo' in two pieces. (*Starts for door.*) Foh Gawd's sake—Ha, ha! Try to scare me wid a popgun. (*Goes close to Knowles.*) Yo' po' little excuse foh a man. (*Takes his gun hand and pulls pistol away.*) Gimme dat! Yo' might hu't yo'se'f. (*Laughs heartily again—opens door.*) Lemme tell you one ting, people. Don' you nevah try fo to scah a niggah what lives in San Juan Hill wid a little nickel-plated popgun. We eats dem foh suppah ev'y night. (*Exits, laughing. Knowles and Alice stand looking at each other for a moment.*)

ALICE—She bluffed you, didn't she?

KNOWLES—(*Shamefacedly.*) Oh, I didn't want to hurt her.

ALICE—Rats! You were scared stiff—and you know it.

KNOWLES—Well, maybe I was—but that hasn't found the papers for me. I must have 'em.

ALICE—I'll bet the man who took my pearls has 'em. If he has, good-night.

KNOWLES—(*Angrily.*) I know how I can get them.

ALICE—How?

KNOWLES—Paying for information as to where he can be found.

ALICE—Where will you get the information?

KNOWLES—Leave it to me. You furnish the money. I'll do the rest.

ALICE—How much will you need?

KNOWLES—I don't know, yet. (*Knock on the door to hall.*)

ALICE—What is it?

VOICE—(*Outside.*) There's a cab waitin' downstairs for you.

ALICE—I forgot all about that costume. (*Calling through door.*) All right, I'll be down.

KNOWLES—Where're you going?

ALICE—(*Wrapping cloak around her.*) 23 Rivington Street—Mrs. Edwards.

KNOWLES—Good. That's my direction, too. I'll go with you. I'll get the information I want down there. Come on.

(Catches up coat and hat, and both exit.)

CURTAIN

ACT IV

Scene—A poorly furnished room in a tenement house on Rivington Street, New York City. The walls are bare, the furniture old, but everything has an air of cleanliness. There is a screen in one corner of the room hiding a bed. A window up stage looks out on a dimly-lighted air shaft. A sewing machine is placed in front of window so as to get the fast fading light. The room is lighted by means of a lamp, which, as the curtain goes up, is discovered on table, down stage.

Time—Same as the preceding act. The light fades in window as the action proceeds, and the time passes in such a way as to show how Saunders can come from Alice Winslow's hotel to this street without an effort of haste.

Discovered—Rose Noble, at sewing machine; her head is resting on the machine, as though she had fallen asleep over her work. After a moment there is a loud knock on the door. Another pause, followed by another knock, more insistent. Rose awakens with a start, looks around, startled. The knock is repeated—this time very loudly. Rose quickly rises, goes to the door and throws it open.

ROSE—Come in. I'm sorry to have kept you waiting, but I must have dropped off to sleep.

(Enters Morris Goldmann, the landlord of the tenement. He is a richly dressed man of the Jewish type—crude—even brutal.)

GOLDMANN—Good evening. I called to see whether you've got that money for my rent yet.

ROSE—I'm sorry—

GOLDMANN—So'm I.

ROSE—I told Mr. Beeman, the janitor, I'd have it for you to-morrow.

GOLDMANN—Yes, and you've told Mr. Beeman lots of times before you'd have it "to-morrow"—and you haven't got it yet.

ROSE—You see, Mr. Goldmann—I—I—I have just been able to get some work to do. It will be finished to-night and delivered to-morrow, and then I'll be able to pay you all there is coming to you. Just give me until then—I'll surely have it.

GOLDMANN—*(Brutally.)* I don't know whether you will nor not. I've heard these hard-luck stories so many times. You wouldn't think it, maybe, but I'm a charitable man myself, but I can't afford to keep an expensive apartment house like this going, unless my tenants pay me my rent. You're three weeks behind now—how do I know you're going to pay me?

ROSE—Oh! Why see, here's the dress I'm working on—it's almost done. I've been up all last night working, working, all the time, just to get it done.

GOLDMANN—(*Looking at dress—grins.*) That's what you ought to be wearing, my dear. Silks and satins and diamonds, and eating in the big restaurants on Broadway, and riding around in your automobile and——

ROSE—(*Sadly smiles.*) I'm afraid that is not for me, Mr. Goldmann—not until I earn a great deal more money.

GOLDMANN—That's what I've come to see you to-night about, my dear.

ROSE—(*Puzzled.*) I don't understand.

GOLDMANN—I can show you how you can do all these things—now—without waiting. I'll make you a business proposition.

ROSE—A business proposition?

GOLDMANN—(*Coming closer to her.*) Sure. You don't like to live down here—even in my stylish apartment house—do you?

ROSE—Not very well, I'll admit. But it's the best I can afford.

GOLDMANN—I'll take you out of it and put you in a nice flat I own on West 63d Street, if——

ROSE—(*Beginning to understand.*) Mr. Goldmann!

GOLDMANN—Now don't get mad. It's a business proposition. You're a fine lookin' woman—you are starving yourself to death down here. There aint no money to be got in this neighborhood by a gook-looking girl like you—but if you go up on 63d Street, I'll see you make lots of it. All you got to do is——

ROSE—Stop! I don't quite understand what you are offering me, but I have a suspicion. If it is as I suspect, I don't want to hear any more. If you are offering me something honorable, don't beat about the bush, but come out at once and say what you have to say.

GOLDMANN—Ah, stop your nonsense. You know what I mean well enough, but if you want to be squeamish, I'll come right out and tell you I'm offering you a chance to get some fat on your bones, and fill the hollow places in your cheeks; to wear some real clothes instead of the rags you're wearing now. You won't have to work at all—all you've got to do is to look swell, ride around in the car I'll furnish you, and be a real lady.

ROSE—Do I understand that you're offering to marry me?

GOLDMANN—Good God—no! I aint the marryin' kind. I don't have to. What's the use of marryin' in New York when you can get all the comforts of a home without it? I'm just

sorry for you, that's all. I told you before I was a charitable man. I do lots of charity work of this kind.

ROSE—(*Indignantly.*) Yes, I've heard of your kind of charity before. The papers are full of it. The world is full of it. The charity men of your kind do is the charity that leads to hell faster than the devil himself. Men like you, Mr. Goldmann, go searching through the dark places, and when you find a poor soul, not lost, but losing the fight for honesty and purity, you, with your temptations of clothes, brightness and food, seem like a ray of light to many of them—and they go with you to enjoy, for a brief space of time, what you have to offer them in the way of sin—only to be thrown aside when their freshness is gone and their usefulness, so far as filling your pockets with gold is concerned. Yes, I am poor—I am starving—my clothes are rags—I do owe you money for the rent of this miserable place I call home, but so long as it *is* my home, I can do as I like in it. To-morrow you may put me on the street if you wish, but to-night this room is *mine* and I tell you to leave it—now!

GOLDMANN—My, my! What a spunky little thing she is! (*Harshly.*) Well, I'll tell you one thing, young woman—you'll get out of this miserable place, as you call it, to-morrow morning,

unless you have the money you owe me. I was offering you something good.

ROSE—I don't want to hear any more from you, Mr. Goldmann. (*Going to door and opening it.*) Go!

GOLDMANN—Oh, I'll go all right. But I'll get you yet—some way. (*Exits.*)

(*Rose sinks down at machine, crying. It grows darker, and when she finally lifts her head, she rises, lights the lamp and places it on machine, and then resumes her sewing. There is a moment's pause, then a cautious footstep is heard outside the door. She stops and listens. After a moment she resumes work again. There is a very hesitating knock on the door. Rose pauses, then rises slowly and tip-toes to door—listens—the knock is repeated.*)

ROSE—(*Without opening door.*) Who's there?

JIMMIE SAUNDERS—(*Outside.*) I want to speak to Mrs. Edwards.

ROSE—This is Mrs. Edwards. Who are you?

SAUNDERS—An old friend.

ROSE—I haven't any old friends.

SAUNDERS—Please don't keep me out here. I've got to talk to you to-night. It's for your own good. You'll know me when you see me.

ROSE—(*Hesitates.*) Well—— (*Opening door.*) Come in. (*Saunders enters. He has changed*

his dress, and is now much more quietly apparelled.)

SAUNDERS—(*Quickly locks door behind him.*)
Don't be frightened.

ROSE—(*Retreating behind table.*) What do you want?

SAUNDERS—(*Standing where the light will fall on his face.*) Don't you know me?

ROSE—I do not.

SAUNDERS—Don't you remember one night, about six years ago, when you helped a man, hunted down by other men, to escape?

ROSE—Perfectly.

SAUNDERS—I'm that man.

ROSE—(*With a cry of delight.*) Oh, at last—at last! After all these years. Oh, why didn't you come to help me three years ago when I sent for you! I've waited so long. I thought I could rely upon your word, and yet, when I needed you most, you failed me—just as every one else has done.

SAUNDERS—I couldn't help it. I wasn't at liberty to come—then. The letter came to me—where I was—but I couldn't take a chance of communicating with you, for fear it would get you into trouble.

ROSE—(*Horror-stricken.*) Do you mean to say you've been in jail?

SAUNDERS—(*Looking ashamed of himself.*) Yes. They caught me with the goods, and gave me a short term.

ROSE—Oh! I *did* so need some one to help me.

SAUNDERS—I'm here to help you now. I was going to leave town again without seein' you, but to-day I came across a face that made me think of you—and I felt—even if I had been in jail—you—you—might be willing to let me help you in some way, if you needed it, and so——

ROSE—Whose was the face you saw that made you think of me?

SAUNDERS—A woman who was up at the lake the summer you helped me escape.

ROSE—What was her name?

SAUNDERS—Alice Winslow.

ROSE—That woman! Sometimes I think I could kill her.

SAUNDERS—Has she injured you?

ROSE—The worst injury one woman could do another.

SAUNDERS—What did she do?

ROSE—Lied about me to her lover—my husband.

SAUNDERS—Your husband? Are you married?

ROSE—(*Burying her face in her hands.*) I don't know.

SAUNDERS—What! I don't understand.

ROSE—The very night you left Lake George, I left also—to be married, secretly, to Howard Knowles; we came to New York and lived here for three years—together—at the end of that time, just—just—just before my—my baby was born, he told me we were not married, and left me alone—going away, as I afterwards learned, with Alice Winslow. She was the only one who saw you in my home that night—she must have told him, for he accused me of—you—— Oh, how can I tell it? He accused me of having had a lover in my home that night! He accused me of having had a lover all the time I was in New York—the same one. I sent for you, when I left our New York home, asking you to come and help me disprove this mad fancy of his—but I never heard from you. My—baby—died. I've been living here, trying to make a living doing sewing—ever since, I've always hoped you'd come—not because I want him again, but because you promised to help me—and I know if he can be found, he can be made to say that we *were* married—even if he did deny it.

SAUNDERS—Poor little woman. You've had a hard time of it. Didn't you have anything to prove that you were married to him?

ROSE—There was a certificate—but he took it. There was also an agreement that we both signed

the night I went away with him, saying that he would acknowledge the marriage three years from that time.

SAUNDERS—What became of them?

ROSE—I don't know. He took them and kept them both. I've never seen them since.

SAUNDERS—(*Under his breath.*) Damn him! (*To her.*) Where is he now?

ROSE—I don't know. He went to England. I don't think he has returned.

SAUNDERS—Do you suppose Alice Winslow knows where he is?

ROSE—I don't know. Why do you ask?

SAUNDERS—(*Smiles.*) Because I had a very interesting conversation with the lady this evening—early. If she does know, I'll find out—some way. (*Looks at her queerly.*) Do you know the man who came in to see you just before I did?

ROSE—He is the owner of the building.

SAUNDERS—What did he want here this time of night?

ROSE—(*Hangs her head.*) He—he——

SAUNDERS—Do you know what his *real* business is?

ROSE—I can guess it.

SAUNDERS—Are you under any obligation to him?

ROSE—I am behind in my rent a little bit—but I'll pay that to-morrow.

SAUNDERS—I'd not have much to do with Goldmann. I know him!

ROSE—So do I!

SAUNDERS—He's a bad one—for a good woman to know. (*Quickly changes the subject.*) Don't worry any more about your troubles. I'm going to be right near you, from now on, and if we can't find out all about your husband, it won't be my fault. I've got to work quietly—— (*She looks disappointed.*) Oh, don't look like that—please. I'm going to help you, but you've got to let me do it in my own way. I know what you think, but this time, you're wrong—I can't explain just now, but—— Here, take this money!

ROSE—(*Drawing back.*) Oh, no, I couldn't. I really don't need it—I'll have plenty to-morrow—after this dress is delivered.

SAUNDERS—Are you sure?

ROSE—(*Faintly.*) Yes—sure. (*Knock at the door. They both pause—startled. Rose, after a moment's pause, goes to door.— Well? (Saunders goes behind screen and motions her not to make his presence known.)*)

ALICE WINSLOW—Does Mrs. Edwards live here?

ROSE—(*Opening door.*) I am Mrs. Edwards—come in.

ALICE—(*Entering.*) I'm looking for a dress

that was given to you by my costumers to finish. It was promised for to-night——

ROSE—It's almost finished—I was working on it now—it was not to be delivered until to-morrow morning.

ALICE—(*Looking closely at her.*) Why—well kick me quick, if it isn't——

ROSE—(*Recognizing Alice.*) You!

ALICE—Me! This is a surprise—for both of us—but I've got a bigger one for you in about a minute.

ROSE—What do you want with me?

ALICE—I want a whole lot! I didn't come here to find Mrs. Howard Knowles—not—but I did come for a dress—now that I do find you instead of Mrs. Edwards, there are several things we will want to talk about before we're through.

ROSE—I don't care to talk about you at all.

ALICE—Oh, it isn't about me, we'll talk—it's about you—you and the pal you had six years ago.

ROSE—I had no "pal" six years ago.

ALICE—What about the man you had concealed in your bed the night I called to see you? Wasn't he a crook?

ROSE—I have nothing to say.

ALICE—Wasn't he the man who had been robbing the hotels in the neighborhood during the summer?

ROSE—What right have you to question me in this way?

ALICE—Oh, you'll see the right in a few minutes. Wasn't he the man who was the father of your baby?

ROSE—Stop! You devil! How did you know I had had a child? You blot on the face of the earth! You wicked, horrible woman! You robber of all that is good and pure in womanhood—you stealer of other women's husbands—how dare you come here to me and ask me these things? How dare you, I say? You, who stole my husband from me—for what reason, God knows—you thief in the night, who robbed me even of my good name by telling my husband of something I had done out of pity—and you—with your evil mind—misconstruing it into something evil like yourself.

ALICE—(*Suddenly sees cane that Saunders has left on top of table.*) Wait a minute. (*Picks up cane.*) Where did this come from?

ROSE—(*Startled.*) I—I——

ALICE—(*Going to door.*) Come up here, you two—I've got a friend I want you to meet. (*Enter Howard Knowles and Policeman Flannagan.*)

ROSE—(*Seeing Howard.*) My husband!

KNOWLES.—Rose!

ALICE—You claim every man for your husband. Officer, you are looking for Jimmie Saunders,

aren't you? Well, I didn't bring you here to find him, but merely for protection, but now that you are here, I think I can tell you that the man you are looking for is here in this house, or has been here to-night.

FLANNAGAN—How do you know?

ALICE—(*Pointing to cane.*) Here is the very stick he carried when he called on me this afternoon!

FLANNAGAN—(*Picks up cane—looks at it.*) Well, I'll be—— (*To Rose.*) Come on, young woman—where's your pal?

ROSE—I haven't any pal, I tell you.

ALICE—The innocent country girl, who loved the farm and didn't care for the big city with all its lights, and raved over women taking care of children and big families—and here you are concealing any woman's husband——

ROSE—Take care——

ALICE—I'll bet a thousand dollars she knows where my pearls are.

ROSE—Pearls?

ALICE—I want her arrested.

FLANNAGAN—I can't arrest her without a warrant. I aint seen her do nothin'.

ALICE—You can arrest her as a suspicious character, can't you?

FLANNAGAN—What—in her own home? Not on your life!

ALICE—Not with the evidence of this cane here?

FLANNAGAN—I kin search the place fer Saunders—if I find him—I kin take 'em both with me—if that'll satisfy you.

ALICE—I want her searched.

FLANNAGAN—I never search a woman.

ALICE—It's my property I'm looking for—I'll do it.

FLANNAGAN—Then you'll do it at your own risk. I won't be a partner in it. (*To Rose.*) Do you mind her searching you?

ROSE—Is it necessary?

FLANNAGAN—No it aint; but if you've got nothing to conceal, what do you care? (*During all this Saunders, behind the screen, is in evidence at times. Howard Knowles is distinctly uneasy at the turn affairs have taken over the discovery of Rose, and is trying to get away. During the search of Rose by Alice, he edges toward the door.*)

ALICE—(*Is passing her hands up and down Rose's body, and finds nothing. She finally attempts to open the front of her dress.*) You've got something in there—what is it?

ROSE—(*Pushing her away.*) No, no.

ALICE—(*Ripping open her dress, snatches a little bag that hangs there.*) Ah, ha! (*In spite of Rose's efforts, she succeeds in opening bag and taking out an old piece of paper, looks at it.*) What

did I tell you! (*Reads.*) Jimmie Saunders, Rivington Street. (*Giving it to Flannagan.*) I told you so.

FLANNAGAN—Who wrote this?

ROSE—(*Sobbing.*) I shan't tell you.

FLANNAGAN—I guess evidence is against you, young woman—you'll have to come along with me.

ROSE—But I haven't done anything. (*Crying.*) Oh, please, please—isn't there any one to help me?

SAUNDERS—(*Quietly stepping from behind screen in front of door.*) Sure!

(*They all turn with a start. Flannagan starts to draw revolver.*)

SAUNDERS—None o' that. Put up your hands! (*Covering them all with revolver.*)

(*Knowles makes an attempt to go out of room.*)

SAUNDERS—Not yet, old top—we'll need you before we're finished.

ALICE—(*Excitedly.*) This is the man who took my pearls. Officer, arrest him.

FLANNAGAN—(*Sheepishly.*) I'd like to—but

SAUNDERS—But—you'd rather not, eh, Flannagan?

ALICE—Coward!

SAUNDERS—(*To Rose.*) Now, Mrs. Knowles, go into that officer's back pocket and get that

revolver he has there. (*She does so.*) Lay it on the table. Then reach into the other pocket and get that pair of handcuffs you'll find. (*She does so.*) Now get the key from his vest pocket. (*She does so.*) Place those handcuffs on Mr. Howard Knowles' wrist. After one is locked, lock the other to Mr. Flannagan's wrist. (*She does so.*) Thanks—now we can talk more comfortably.

FLANNAGAN—Say—what does this mean—you're the man I want, not Knowles.

ALICE—I should say he was—he stole my pearls.

SAUNDERS—Forget it! Now, Mr. Howard Knowles—this lady says she is your wife. Is that so?

KNOWLES—(*Hesitates.*) Well—I—er——

ALICE—Why don't you speak up and tell him—the truth.

SAUNDERS—Come on—speak up—is she?

KNOWLES—No—o!

ROSE—(*Burying her face in her hands.*) Oh!

SAUNDERS—All right. We'll have to take your word for it for a moment. (*Drawing paper out of pocket.*) Did you ever see this paper before?

KNOWLES—(*Startled.*) Why—I——

ROSE—That's the paper I signed the night I ran away with him.

SAUNDERS—You want to listen to all this, Flannagan. It'll do you good. (*To Knowles.*) If you never saw this paper before—how comes it that your name is signed to it, too?

KNOWLES—It's a lie.

SAUNDERS—All right—we'll let it pass. Now—(*taking a second paper from his pocket*) here's a marriage certificate, signed by the Reverend John Williams, saying you were married to Rose Noble on the night of September 19th, 1907. You see, Flannagan, he's lied twice—he'll do it again.

ROSE—Oh, then he is my husband!

SAUNDERS—I'm sorry to say he is, Mrs. Knowles!

ROSE—Oh, thank God—thank God!

ALICE—(*To Knowles.*) Well, I'll be—you dirty dog! You lied to me, too.

KNOWLES—(*Defiantly.*) Well, what of it—you can't arrest me for that!

SAUNDERS—You're right—they can't—but—now, Flannagan, get ready for the surprise of your life. You can arrest him for the theft of fifty thousand dollars, stolen a little over three years ago, from his client, George Moser. The police have been looking for him ever since!

KNOWLES—That's a lie, too.

SAUNDERS—You've got a bad habit of telling people they lie.

ALICE—He sure has—I know he stole the money—he told me so.

KNOWLES—(*Angrily.*) You'd better keep quiet—or you'll go with me when I go.

FLANNAGAN—Oh, then you admit there's a chance of your going—up?

KNOWLES—I'll admit nothing. I didn't come here to be questioned by a crook.

SAUNDERS—How do you know I'm a crook?

KNOWLES—(*Sullenly.*) None of your business.

FLANNAGAN—Say, you're Jimmie Saunders!

SAUNDERS—Well, well—isn't he the clever little boy! Just waking up, Flannagan? Of course I'm Jimmie Saunders—what of it?

FLANNAGAN—Oh, nothing—

KNOWLES—See here—I want that man arrested—he's admitted he's the man you've been looking for.

FLANNAGAN—(*Smiles.*) Well, just at the present moment, I don't see how I'm going to do any arrestin'.

KNOWLES—Well, then I'll get some one who will! (*Starts for door.*)

SAUNDERS—All right, go with him, Flannagan. I don't see very well how he's going to get away without you. (*Knowles is trying to disengage his manacled hand from the cuff attached to his wrist.*) I don't think I'd go just yet, Knowles.

You'll start soon enough—with Flannagan, too; so don't be in a hurry. Now, Mrs. Knowles, take that paper you signed the night you went away with this man, and read it, then tell us what it contains.

ROSE—(*Picking up paper from table.*) Why—(*Reads it hurriedly.*) Why—it seems to be a paper giving this man the rights to some property my grandfather left me near Lake George.

SAUNDERS—That's *just* what it is. (*To Knowles.*) You overreached yourself that time, didn't you? You thought all you would have to do was to get this poor child's signature to that document—without witnesses—and then sell your rights in it—because it has oil on it—for a big price. You didn't stop to realize that the moment you married her, this document was absolutely no good without a release from your *wife* to her rights in it. That's the reason you denied the marriage—that's the reason you left her when she needed you most. You know, I've been a pretty hard customer in my time, but you—well, you're a damned scoundrel!

ALICE—Well I never! (*To Rose.*) You poor kid! (*To Flannagan.*) I guess this fellow has got us dead to rights. I'm willing to go along with you—if it's necessary—just to tell my story as to the facts in this thing—so far as the robbery

of the fifty thousand dollars is concerned. I don't know about the rest of it—but b'lieve me, friends—if I'd a known——

SAUNDERS—(*To Rose.*) Hand me that cane, will you, please? (*Rose does so.*) Thank you! (*Presses head of cane, which comes off—he lays down his revolver to accomplish all this.*) Now—watch! (*Turns cane upside down and pearls fall out.*)

ALICE—My pearls!

SAUNDERS—(*Coolly.*) Are they?

ALICE—Of course they are—and you know it.

SAUNDERS—Where did you get them?

ALICE—Why, I bought them.

SAUNDERS—Where did you get them—bought them? Where did you get the money to buy them?

ALICE—From—— (*Looks at Knowles.*) Oh, I see—you think they aint mine?

SAUNDERS—Well, I'll leave it to your business judgment. If they are yours—you'll have to acknowledge yourself as a confederate to this man. If you are willing to return them to the proper authorities, through a third party, of course, as part of the spoils we hope to recover——

(*Flannagan in the mean while has edged over to the table near the revolver, taking Knowles with him, and finally lets his hand lay near the pistol, thinking himself unobserved by Saunders. He takes up*

the gun quickly, and points it at Saunders.)

FLANNAGAN—Throw up your hands.

SAUNDERS—(*Looks around coolly.*) Oh, don't be foolish, Flannagan. I'm not going to run away.

FLANNAGAN—(*Grimly.*) You bet you aint. Not yet. (*To Rose.*) Now, young woman, take that key and unlock this cuff from my wrist—and be quick about it.

SAUNDERS—Don't do anything of the kind, Rose. (*Taking up Flannagan's revolver which Rose has laid on table earlier.*) That gun is empty, Flannagan!

FLANNAGAN—(*Looking at it.*) Well, I'll be damned! (*Throws it on the table, after looking at it.*)

SAUNDERS—We're not making very much progress, are we? However, we'll commence right now. (*Takes paper from pocket and hands it to Flannagan.*) Do you want to serve that now, Flannagan?

FLANNAGAN—(*Takes paper with one hand and reads it.*) Why, this is a warrant for the arrest of Howard Knowles for embezzlement!

SAUNDERS—It is.

ROSE—What!

ALICE—Holy smoke! What am I up against?

KNOWLES—Who are you?

SAUNDERS—Flannagan can tell you, if he cares to.

FLANNAGAN—Why, this is James Saunders—a Burns' man!

SAUNDERS—That's me.

ALICE—What did you steal my pearls for?

SAUNDERS—I didn't. I took them—away from you—to keep you from getting into more trouble. Since you left this fellow Knowles, you've been pretty decent—making your living—honestly—with your dancing. I've been looking for Knowles for a long, long time—in fact, ever since I joined the Burns' Agency—it's my first case—but I've got him! I knew he'd hunt you up when he came back from England, so I had to get acquainted with you first. Now, as I started to say a few minutes ago, when Flannagan so rudely interrupted me—if you're willing to turn over these pearls to me—as part of his spoils from the fifty-thousand-dollar robbery—you can go, but if you still want to claim them as yours—I'm afraid you'll have to go with him.

ALICE—You can have the pearls! It's me for the narrow path! Good-night! (*To Rose.*) I'm sorry for you—sorry because I done you a wrong without knowing it really was a wrong. If I'd a-known this man was really your husband, believe

me, kid, he'd never have gone away with little Alice. (*To Saunders.*) I don't understand it all yet, but when you want me to testify against this—this—excuse for a man, you know where to find me. (*Takes up unfinished dress.*) I'll finish this myself. It's me for rehearsal quick! (*Exit.*)

FLANNAGAN—(*To Knowles.*) Come along, you—I've got the warrant—but if this isn't the surprise of my life—I'm a liar. (*To Saunders.*) I guess it's all right—you've got the goods on you to prove you're what you say you are—but you're some class, Mr. Jimmie Saunders, Burns' man, alias Mr. Jimmie Saunders, ex-convict.

SAUNDERS—(*Smiling.*) That's all right, Flannagan. There's a lot you've got to learn yet—even if you are a New York policeman. (*Hands him pistol.*) Here's your gun. Some day, when you wake up, after you get credit for this arrest, I'll tell you all about it.

KNOWLES—Well, I guess I've run to the end of my tether—but now I'll admit what I wouldn't before—this woman *is* my wife—and she'll suffer for her part in this affair.

SAUNDERS—She *has* suffered—all she's going to. The minute you're convicted, and you will be—she's free. She's going back to her little home—the one you tried to steal away from her with

your lies—and she's going to be happy——

KNOWLES—With her crook detective, I suppose?

SAUNDERS—Flannagan—you'd better take him out of here before I do something to him I could be arrested for!

FLANNAGAN—Come on—Mr. Knowles. He's got the goods on you—and I'm damned glad of it!

(Exit with Knowles. There is a long pause, in which Rose nervously turns up lamp and cleans up the top of the sewing machine. She finally looks up and says:)

ROSE—Were you *really* in prison, Mr. Saunders?

SAUNDERS—I really was.

ROSE—Then how does it come that you're—well—honest now?

SAUNDERS—*(Looks at her for quite a time before answering.)* I don't know just how I'm going to make myself understood, because if I say what's on my mind, I might lose something I've been fighting for this long while. I can say this, however: ever since your letter reached me—in prison—I made up my mind to behave myself when I got out. When you saved my life six years ago—away up in those mountains—the promise I gave to you has haunted me. When I found myself where I couldn't help you, when you

needed me, I made up my mind that never again would I be caught where I couldn't redeem my promise to any one. When I got out, I came right down here, and, unknown to you, saw how you were living—and wondered why. Then I got this job through some friends—who still trusted me—and—well, the very first case that came to me was this Howard Knowles one. The further I got into it, the more I liked it, but I hadn't any idea this man was your husband until I came across those papers I gave you. (*Looking ashamed.*) I had to lie to you when I said I was going out of town again—without seeing you—that I didn't know you were married. I knew Alice Winslow would come down here in search of her dress—for I knew the costumer had given it to you to work on—and I hoped she would bring Knowles with her—just as she did. Don't ask me *how* I know these things—but now it's my business to know many things, and I can't tell you *how* I know them.

ROSE—You've cleared up many things that were puzzling me.

SAUNDERS—I'm going to clear up lots more. (*Looking around the room.*) You can't stay here any longer.

ROSE—Why not?

SAUNDERS—It isn't safe—now.

ROSE—It has been safe for a long, long time.

SAUNDERS—Well, there isn't any necessity of your doing so any longer.

ROSE—Why?

SAUNDERS—You're a wealthy young woman, now.

ROSE—Wealthy?

SAUNDERS—That land of yours is worth a whole lot of money—they've been looking for you for a long time. There's lots of money waiting for you.

ROSE—Well, it can wait a little while longer. I've nowhere else to go to-night.

SAUNDERS—You can go to some hotel.

ROSE—(*Simply.*) I haven't any money.

SAUNDERS—I can give you all you want.

ROSE—(*Hesitated.*) I—I—I'd rather stay here—to-night.

SAUNDERS—Why?

ROSE—(*Looking around the room.*) There are memories here that cannot be easily forgotten. I have suffered here—I still suffer—here. I would suffer more to-night if I should go elsewhere. (*Laying her hand on his arm.*) You have brought me the greatest comfort a man could possibly bring to a woman—the knowledge that in her suffering she has done nothing that the world could really censure. I *am* a wife, even though

my—husband—is one that no woman could be proud of. (*Her voice breaks.*) When—my—baby—passed away, I thanked my God its little life had ended as it did—because of what it would have had to go through had it lived—the knowledge that some day it might learn its mother had been no wife to any man. Now—now, I wonder why God took it from me. (*She cries softly. Saunders stands looking at her for a moment, then he touches her hand tenderly.*)

SAUNDERS—I'm going now. To-morrow I'll come back and take you away from this place of tender memories. You'll want to go back to your little home in the mountains that you left when you were a little girl—a woman, now—because suffering makes womanhood. Some day, when you have regained—your freedom—and your health—you're going to send me word that you want to see me—and this time I'll come at the first call—but when I come, I can hold out my hand to you, and you can take it without shame—not because your heart is tender, as it was when you helped me six years ago—but because you will realize that it's a hand that you yourself have made—a clean one—and when I hold it out to you, back of it will be a heart that has been beating with hope and—love for you for a long, long time. (*She does not reply.*) I—don't suppose you can give me even a

little word of encouragement, to-night? I guess your heart is too full of what has passed to think, as I do, of what is to come.

ROSE—(*After a moment's silence, looks at him.*) My heart is filled—with many things—among them gratitude. But, oh, don't ask me for something I couldn't give—yet. (*Takes his hand.*) I will go back to the mountains—alone—and some day, when I've grown back into a part of the little girl you first knew, I *will* send for you—and I *will* take this hand and I'll kiss it—just as I do now—(*she does so, against his wishes*) and I know it will be a clean hand—made so, not by me, but by the best thoughts of a man grown—good—by his own efforts. And now, good-night. Come for me to-morrow morning—everything can be settled up then.

SAUNDERS—(*Slowly takes hat from table, goes to door—turns, holds out his hand to her once more—she takes it.*) Good-night! (*Exit.*)

(*Rose comes down slowly, after locking the door. Stands for a moment looking around the room, goes over slowly to the old dressing-case, sinks down in front of it, opens the bottom drawer, takes out a bundle wrapped in a faded silk cover, opens it, takes out some baby's clothes and, last of all, a little baby's shoe. Her head sinks forward until it rests on the edge of the drawer, and her lips are pressed*

against the shoe. She softly cries as she hugs the baby's clothes to her breast. The lamp sputters—goes out—but she does not move; her sobs are heard in the darkness.)

CURTAIN

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